world FILM news

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS

MEET THE CENSORS! CELLULOID CHILDREN

CONTINENTAL SUPPLEMENT

LOUIS GOLDING ERICH POMMER

ANDREW BUCHANAN WINIFRED HOLMES DENIS MYERS

WALTER LEIGH

MONTHLY 1S. AUGUST

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CINEMA.	PLACE.
Plaza... ...	Regent Street.
Paramount ...	Tottenham Court Rd.
Forum ...	Southampton.
Capitol ...	Cardiff.
Westover ...	Bournemouth.
Futurist ...	Birmingham.
Kings ...	Bristol.
Whiteladies ...	Bristol.
Paramount ...	Manchester.
Paramount ...	Liverpool.
Regal ...	Torquay.
Paramount ...	Leeds.
Forum ...	Fulham Road.
Forum ..	Ealing.
Embassy ...	Harrow.
Cameo ...	Bear Street.
Tatler ...	Charing Cross Road.
Tussauds ...	Baker Street.
Lido ...	Golders Green.
Ritz	Edgware.
South Cinema	Hackney.
Capitol ...	Dublin.
Grafton ...	Dublin.
Palace ...	Camberwell.
Savoy ...	Croydon.
Hippodrome	Croydon.
Ritz	Tunbridge Wells.
Grand ...	Bournemouth.
Regent ...	Norwich.
Hippodrome	Ipswich.
Atherley ...	Southampton.
Broadway ...	Southampton.
Hippodrome	Belfast.
Court ...	Wigan.
Cinema ...	Euston.
Picturedrome	Eastbourne.
Gaiety ...	Hastings.
Odeon ...	Derby.
Palace ...	Leicester.
Elite ...	Nottingham.
Coliseum ...	Derby.
Empire ...	Coventry.
Princes ...	Portsmouth.
Tivoli ...	Portsmouth.
Sphere ...	Tottenham Court Rd.
Palace ...	Greenock.
Royal ...	Wolverhampton.
Central ...	Reading.
Kings ...	Leyton.
Empire ...	Walthamstow.
Palace ...	Aldershot.
Theatre de Luxe	Gloucester.
Theatre ...	Cambridge.
Odeon ...	Guildford.
Langham ...	Hull.
Carlton ...	Hull.
Shaftesbury	Leeds.
Pavilion ...	Chelmsford.
Albert ...	Swansea.
Savoy ...	Reading.
Windsor ...	Smethwick.
Savoy ...	Northampton.
Curzon ...	Brighton.
Savoy ...	Nottingham.
Berridge Road	Nottingham.
Kings ...	Exeter.
Empire ...	Exeter.
Headgate ...	Colchester.
Troxy ...	Brighton.
Fosse Cinema	Leicester.

CINEMA.	PLACE.
West End ...	Wolverhampton.
Aspley ...	Nottingham.
Odeon ...	Blackheath, Birmingham.
Allerton ...	Derby.
Cinedrome ...	Plymouth.
Regent ...	Hertford.
Palace ...	Blackpool.
Synod ...	Edinburgh.
Kings ...	Liverpool.
Princes ...	Liverpool.
Odeon ...	Wimbledon.
Orient ...	Ayr.
Monseigneur	Edinburgh.
Alhambra ...	Dunfermline.
Gaiety ...	Leith.
Cranstone ...	Glasgow.
Palladium ...	Morecambe.
Deansgate ...	Manchester.
Majestic ...	Blackburn.
Rivoli ...	Worthing.
Regal ...	Canterbury.
Queens ...	Stirling.
Tivoli ...	Edinburgh.
Palace ...	Rothesay.
Picture House	Dumbarton.
Commodore...	Liverpool.
Cecil ...	Hull.
Rialto ...	York.
Dorchester ...	Hull.
Majestic ...	West Hartlepool.
Elite	Middlesbrough.
Picture House	Carlisle.
Royal ...	Liverpool.
Lyceum ...	Govan.
Playhouse ...	Peebles.
Astoria ...	Aberdeen.
Orient ...	Glasgow.
Opera House	Kirkcaldy.
Rio	Rutherglen.
Regal ...	Dumfries.
Majestic ...	Dundee.
Palace ...	Rochdale.
Savoy ...	Blackburn.
Dominion ...	Leeds.
Regal ...	Coatbridge.
Playhouse ...	Peterhead.
La Scala ...	Motherwell.
Plaza... ...	Crewe.
Picture House	St. Andrews.
City ...	Peterboro'.
Playhouse ...	Inverness.
Playhouse ...	Elgin.
Central ...	Airdrie.
Royalty ...	Douglas, I. of M.
Empire ...	Carnarvon.
Elite	Bradford.
Royal ...	Middlesbrough.
Brittania ...	Dundee.
Pavilion ...	Wick.
Star	Sheffield.
Alex	Paisley.
West End ...	Paisley.
Astoria ...	Belfast.
Capital ...	Belfast.
Broadway ...	Belfast.
Strand ...	Londonderry.
Lyceum ...	Bradford.
Monseigneur	Piccadilly.
Monseigneur	Strand.
Coliseum ...	Aberystwyth.

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4 NEW FILMS

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A REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN ENGLAND TO-DAY

—in industry, housing and the home. We are moving towards better working conditions, healthier and more comfortable homes. The film shows how applied science is easing life for men and women alike. It takes us from Sheffield to the Cotswolds; from Wythenshawe to the Great West Road; it visits housing estates in town and country; it shows the beginning of a new England.

A FILM ABOUT COOKING

This is a big step towards good nutrition. Two famous chefs show the art of cooking simple things. One prepares a meal such as you yourself could produce at home. Another reveals many of those secret ways of doing ordinary things which are known as chefs' tips and are never found in cookery books. And it's not just straight cookery —a humorist gets into the kitchen with the chef!

GETTING INTO HOT WATER

People don't realise just what trouble and annoyance is caused in every household where there is not enough hot water. Mr. Therm makes his first appearance as a star on the screen, and solves all their difficulties with his new water heaters. This is a sensible film about a real problem, but cheerfulness and music keep breaking in.

★ *The Gas Light and Coke Company will gladly arrange a complimentary showing of the programme to any society in its own area which can provide a suitable and reasonably numerous audience, and a hall. In the rest of England, all those interested, should approach their own Gas Undertaking, through whose courtesy it may be possible to arrange a showing.*

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world FILM news

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS
(INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY)

VOL. 1 NO. 5 | PRICE: ONE SHILLING | AUGUST 1936

CELLULOID CHILDREN

By WINIFRED HOLMES

Froebel-trained child psychologist and poet

A PORTLY SMALL boy aged three staggered into his mother's drawing-room where a party was in progress, lugging an attaché case. "Where are you going, Hugh?" "Away for the week-end; this is my wuggage." "Is it indeed! Let's see what you've taken away with you."

The case was opened and in it was precisely one roll of toilet paper!

This little incident reveals the intense but distorted realism of the child mind. The real stuff of life, not fairy stories or fantasies, was what his imagination fed on. Going away for the week-end, taking his "wuggage," packing the case with what seemed to him the most important thing of all; not toys or books, but something real and with a necessary function. Food would come to him, clothes just appear; but toilet paper—well, he must take his own supply!

It is almost impossible, or rarely possible, once we have passed the borderline of adolescence, to re-enter this world of childhood. We realise sadly that children are not just inexperienced humans, but a different race altogether. So we sentimentalise childhood in nauseating and false fashion. Take for example the Shirley Temple films. In them a precocious and clever child is made to reflect this sentimental adult attitude towards children. The dear little one can melt the hardest gangster heart; she can bring together estranged couples; tears start to the stoniest eyes. Her appeal is sob-stuff, smacking of the efforts of third-rate female novelists of a century ago.

In reality children are not interested in the problems of adults. That is, unless there is something to be got out of them! They are so busy adjusting themselves to life and the material world, that the focus of their interest lies elsewhere. The early American child "gang" pictures, with the freckled Irish boy as leader, were psychologically true to this fact. Intent on their own nefarious business irrespective of the grown-up life about them, the gangs were self-sufficient in their own minds, except when authority impinged on this splendid isolation and forced upon them an adult point of view.

This is still more true of that perfect child-film *Emil and the Detectives*. Somehow a miracle has taken place—an adult has slipped back into childhood and completely taken on its point of view. Emil and his friends have no more contact with the city world than Zulus would have. They are utterly absorbed in their adventure, the chase of the thief—an ordinary man, distorted by their vision into a macabre character, physically and mentally. The boy who rides into his home on his "mustang" can't understand his mother's denseness in not seeing at once that it *is* his mustang and not his scooter. The little rich boy whose job is to watch the telephone and who will not be budged from his post for the ordinary functions of sleeping and eating—these are authentic. Adults realise this authenticity; children adore the film.

Children also adore Shirley Temple—but for another reason. Because she has achieved a sophistication and at-homeness in the world that they themselves yearn after and admire. She is the beau ideal of all little American girls. They want to look like her, to dance and sing like her, and to be also without any shyness or self-consciousness whatever. But they do not enjoy her *films*, or rather, *vehicles*, to the same degree. These are, as I said before, entirely adult conceptions, false to childhood.

Freddie Bartholomew comes into the same category. He too is made to reflect this sentimental grown-up attitude towards children. His screen character is unnatural and sweetish. "Pi" he would have been called in robust young male circles. Jackies Coogan and Cooper were his direct forerunners, but in their day films were more naïve and full of action, so the curse was largely taken off their performances.

Jackie Searle is a more interesting child character. He is usually the spoilt wealthy sneering American boy of fourteen or so; a definitely unpleasant type, but a fairly common one across the Atlantic. It is a healthy sign that Hollywood producers are allowing that children are not all, or always, angels. Jane Withers is a good foil to Temple sentiment. The two bad little schemers in *We Three* got away with murder and the entire picture. Here they meddled in adult life, but for

Shirley Temple

something they could get out of it. They did not realise for an instant what harm they were doing; they only knew they were advantaging themselves.

French producers have seen children in another light altogether. That is as innocent helpless victims of environment and circumstance. They are not sentimentalised or moralised over as in Dickens. They are natural children, seen clearly and whole, who are caught in a web of unhappiness. In the Robert Lynen films this sentiment of pity is exploited into mawkishness and occasionally horror. In *La Maternelle* and *Zéro de Conduite* sentiment is never sentimentality; there is nothing melodramatic in Paulette Elambert's attempted suicide. It is part of a logical progression of events and emotions, not dragged in to harrow our feelings.

La Maternelle is a masterpiece, a film classic, a document of scientific interest to every child psychologist. In *Emil and the Detectives* the children evidently came from happy homes, and could therefore focus their attention on anything but the adults surrounding them. They were free from them, so to speak. The children in *La Maternelle* have no such freedom. Victims of circumstance, they depend on stranger adults for life, affection and happiness. So their focus is pathetically on the people round them. Remember the sad little Jewish baby's sudden half smile at Madeleine Renaud—a smile of returning confidence and carefree babyhood? An almost unbearable smile. Paulette Eluard herself lives in the poverty-striken "Zone" of Paris. She knows the part she plays; tragic children live all round her. She is not acting; she lives her part.

Zéro de Conduite is also a masterpiece of child insight. Here the boys are victims of circumstance insofar as they are shut up together at boarding-school, a kind of prison. But here the adults are isolated, inimical. The boys have to band together against adultism, exemplified by the masters. These masters are distorted by the boys' vision into strange beings, quite inexplicable. There is the narrow tall master who has shot up out of his clothes till coat and sleeves and trousers are ridiculously short for him; a kind of feline master who is not actually terrifying but just a little mad; stealthy, silent, prowling, not malevolent. The headmaster is a child, dressed as a pompous old man with long beard. When he rows a boy he swells up and advances threateningly upon him till a loud explosion occurs (entirely silently and in the boy's mind), after which he subsides again. This is a remarkable shot. When I was at school my headmistress used to call the older girls into her study separately, to row them about something. It seemed to me her eyes turned bright red and shot out lurid beams like searchlights. She trembled with rage and seemed to come closer, closer, till suddenly the hypnotic spell broke and she was a little elderly woman again, clutching the table in a desperate attempt to control herself. After my terror I found myself despising her and yet feeling sorry for her at the same time.

It is definitely established by authorities that children do not like terror and horror exploited on the screen. They experience it in real life; how little we know the terrors and inhibitions our careless words, story-telling, anger may bring on them. *Frankenstein* and such films are hated, and in my opinion should not on any account be seen by children under eighteen. Adventure and excitement films are different altogether, though cruelty and harrowing scenes should be left out of them when they are shown to young audiences; their effect is too terrible and far-reaching.

Children have a natural and instinctive feeling for justice and fair-play, kindness and self-sacrifice. They always respond to the hero-villain simplicities—cheering and booing accordingly. This is the preservation-of-the-herd instinct in its pristine state, before it is overlaid by paper-rules of conduct or by expediency. Margery Locket says she has known children respond to the principles of right and wrong in films with quite foreign environments, and in situations they cannot possibly have heard of. This is no parrot morality, but the phenomenon of pure social instinct.

Jane Withers

The fact that children dislike love and sex in films is well known but superficially analysed. It is generally considered that they are just not interested, being unaware as yet of this side of human life. In reality they are deeply aware of it and are frightened and repelled by its manifestations too early in their development. In defence they laugh or appear bored. As soon as adolescence is fully entered upon sex becomes of the greatest interest, though still there is a lingering repulsion. In my opinion children should never be shown films with a love or sex basis. They are disturbing and may cause a psychic complex of revulsion lasting long after proper development has taken place and threatening normality.

"Son Autre Amour" **(By courtesy of "The Academy")**

Pommer Directs Directors

"BUT WHEN I influence a director he may not be aware of it," says Mr. Pommer. "We discuss, I compromise, my director compromises. When we go on to the set the director knows what he is going to do, and I know what is going to be done. A script should be complete before the work is commenced: all preparation on a picture is well spent. I will not tell a director what he should do when he is in the studio, but I am always somewhere about so that I can be asked." And he is. Pommer goes from department to department, the cutting room, the wardrobe, the publicity department; to see the rushes, then up to the office, then back to the set. But in the midst of this vigilant watch on what is being done by all his employees he still appears to have time, and when he talks to anyone he does so with full attention. There is no pose of the 'great' man about Pommer and when he talks it is not as an autocrat; only his walk—very swift strides and a vigorous movement of his arms—suggests that by hook or by crook he will get things done. In this man, whom Paul Rotha has called the 'real genius behind the great years of the German cinema,' business capacity is allied to astonishing perception of the artistic possibilities of cinema, and an exceptional appreciation of what people can be encouraged to do and become.

The three directors whom Pommer has working for his new company, Pendennis Productions, at Denham, are William K. Howard, Cameron Menzies and René Clair. Howard, director of *Vanessa* and *Rendezvous*, is making his first British picture *Fire Over England* with Flora Robson as Queen Elizabeth; Menzies will direct *Troop Ship* which Pommer describes as a peculiarly English subject; René Clair will make a film of the old-time music halls, *A Bicycle Built for Two*, which was once upon a time to have been made under the auspices of Korda.

The script of *Fire Over England* is not quite as exact as the Child's History of England, for it is based upon the novel of the same name by A. E. W. Mason and adapted by Clemence Dane and Sergei Nolbandov, but it is a fairly exciting thriller. Korda had many scripts for this long delayed picture including one by Ferdinand Bruckner (reported in the first issue of *W.F.N.*). This script was discarded because certain of the characters were so German, it was felt that the British public would not accept them. M. S.

Paul Rotha in Arms

SIR,

I wish to draw attention to the showing of my documentary film *Shipyard* at the Monseigneur News Theatre, Piccadilly, London, on July 20th, 21st and 22nd. This film, which in its original version depicts the building of the liner *S.S. Orion* and its relation to the life of the town Barrow-in-Furness, and which took over a year to produce, has been mutilated in a way which, in my opinion and in the opinion of many people who have seen the film, is unpardonable. Not only were the credit titles to myself and my technical staff omitted, but whole sequences were cut out, making the story and the meaning of the film quite incomprehensible.

To my knowledge many people are going to this theatre because they associate the film with the advancing documentary movement. The discredit thus done to the documentary group and to my work as a film director is likely to cause great harm in the future. If several chapters were deleted at random by his publishers from a novel by J. B. Priestley, or if a painting by Augustus John were partly obliterated with stamp paper by the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy, public opinion would give rise to an outcry and the author or painter would have legal redress. We in the documentary film field are sincerely trying to fulfil a national purpose by portraying aspects of our national life on the screen. We have no redress against such mutilation of our work, except to ask your leave to publish this protest.

Yours etc.,

PAUL ROTHA.

Is it Gaumont *British?*

THE BARS of Wardour Street have been agog this month with discussions of the new international deal linking Gaumont-British, 20th Century-Fox, and Loews Inc.

Loews, in addition to owning a theatre circuit in America, are the financial backers of M.G.M. By this deal the Loew concern are expected to take over from 20th Century-Fox a half interest in the latter's holding in Gaumont-British.

Mr. Joseph Schenck, Chairman of 20th Century-Fox has announced that a new company will be formed. It is probable that this company will have a capital of approximately £3,000,000, and a substantial block of its stock will be sold to the British public. It is understood that Mr. Beddington Behrens, nephew of Sir Montagu Burton, of the 50 Shilling Tailors, may be chairman. Mr. Behrens is a partner in Myers and Company, a firm of Throgmorton Street brokers.

The resources of the companies concerned in the deal are:

Loews Incorporated: assets totalling £25,000,000: a circuit of 169 theatres, cinemas, etc., in the United States and Canada.

20th Century-Fox: total assets about £11,000,000. Produces and distributes through a number of subsidiary companies.

Gaumont-British: owns or controls over 300 theatres; has a number of film holding companies, and *is substantially interested in Baird Television.*

American papers are openly claiming that the deal represents domination of the group by American interests.

"Tatler," well-known columnist of the *Film Renter*, says:

"For once the Americans—and I particularly indicate the Schenck Brothers—have not been clever! This move of theirs, with its evident desire to control and direct a vast circuit of theatres and studios, is not far-sighted—it's definitely the shortest-sighted policy any American concern has embarked upon to date . . .

"And now—what? Revolutionary changes in the industry are certain. *First I envisage, if this deal is finally consummated, the eventual break-up of the K.R.S.* It must happen—that sticks out a mile. Just think for a moment. The main function of the Renters' Society has been to stop exhibitor combines. . . .

"But it would be absolutely ludicrous for them to object any longer to exhibitor booking combines, when the three largest renter-producers themselves combine under one banner to regulate prices! . . .

". . . What do you suppose he (John Maxwell)* is going to do—lie down and take this situation lightly? Not if I know him! And that's only one aspect of this alarming attempt to corner the British industry—*because that is what it is, any way you look at it!* . . .

"So now I ask you the question—have the Schencks been clever? Their present action means Government intervention of some kind or other, possibly in an indirect way—whether it be increased Quota, or a heavy import duty. *The latter would mean a cost to the American industry of at least one to one and a half millions a year.* . . .

"Public opinion, too, is profoundly affected. . . . England does not like the thought of American-dominated kinemas. Would America like an inverse domination, if the boot were on the other foot? No, this deal is a frightful mistake—and its full repercussions even yet cannot be foreseen. Certain it is that it will cost America millions, for this, or any other Government, will not take such a move lying down. All this sanctimonious blah about control remaining British deceives no one. . . .

"This deal is bad, decidedly so, but I don't think its protagonists could quite have envisaged where it would lead when they set out in an attempt to corner the British film market. Domination from any source is a bad thing! This week is fraught with big possibilities—anything may happen. Questions are being raised in Parliament. . . . "

* John Maxwell, chairman and managing director Associated British Picture Corporation controlling the important A.B.C. theatre circuit.

ISIDORE'S INTERNATIONAL RESTAURANT

"Will you please leave a slice for the poor English?"

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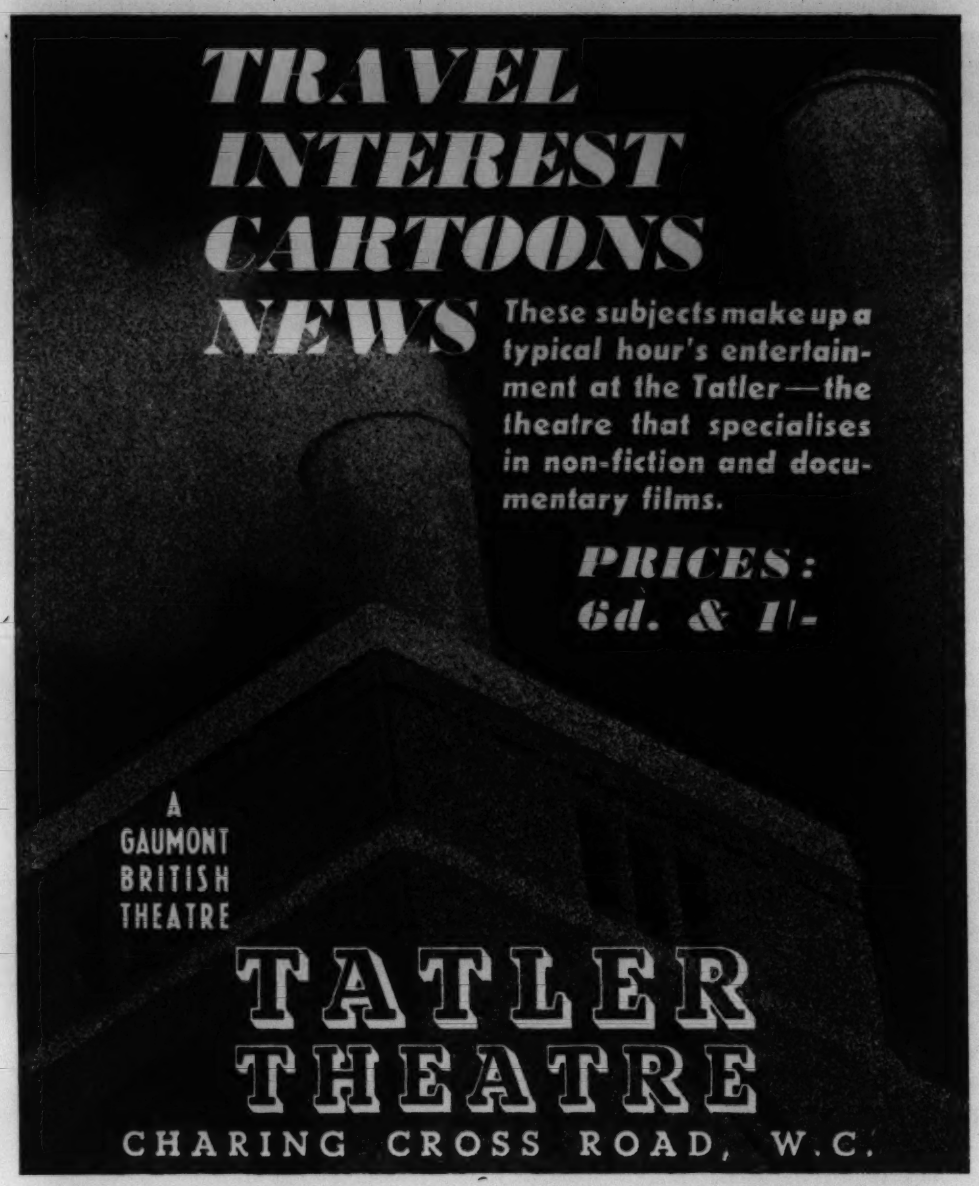

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Meet Oliver Bell
Institute's New Manager

PUKKA SAHIB OLIVER BELL stretched his huge frame and twitched the window curtains behind him.

It isn't really fair to poke fun at him, but he is nice enough not to mind. And he is so charming —so large—so genial—so eminently right—and so very Oxford.

I liked Mr. Bell. I liked his amiability, his lack of self-importance (in spite of that Oxford manner).

He doesn't try to impress you by such childish pomposities as keeping you waiting, before he is ready to see you.

However he may talk as though he were on the political platform, he does know what he is talking about—and he seems the sort of wallah (sorry—the sort of man) to get things done.

The sunlight streamed through the window and spotlit one side of the face of the new General Manager of the British Film Institute.

"The conservation of energy seems to be the most pressing immediate need of the British Film Institute," he said.

I blinked.

Oliver Bell

"The Institute has been accused of overtaxing its strength. But perhaps zeal hath outrun discretion."

Mr. Bell—he really does talk like this—put his fingertips together in the manner approved by the Conservative Office.

"My object," he said, "is to put first things first."

He paused, to let this sink in, then:

"We must form a proper picture of ourselves in the public mind. We need publicity,"

He stage-managed the curtains again, deftly.

"We must try and tone up our organisation," he went on, "and decentralise.

"Local branches must be increased—and they must learn to pull their weight.

"If they want a lecture in the provinces or a demonstration on some technical or educational aspect of the cinema, they must be able to go to their own expert and not depend on me or my assistant to come down and give it.

"You see, the trouble is we've been trying to do too much—that's what I meant by conserving our energy—we must concentrate on fewer things.

"Children, for instance. Do you realise," Mr. Bell addressed an imaginary audience, "that there are between 5 and 6 million children between the ages of 5 and 10?

"This seems a very large constituency to have been left unorganised for so long.

"I have in mind the calling of a really representative Conference to discuss the 'Child and the Cinema'—more objectively and realistically than it has ever been done.

"Children's educational entertainment needs organising, and it can only be done by co-operation between exhibitors and educational authorities.

"You know," said Oliver Bell, with a twinkle, "my ideas follow quite closely those suggested in a recent issue of *W.F.N.*

"My colleague and technical adviser, Mr. Waley, is working on a series of proposals to organise technical courses on projection for our members and for teachers.

"Then, of course, there's our routine work, the Film Library, with the storing of historical treasures—I mean historical from the point of view of the cinema art and industry—such as a newsreel of the early 1900's—both that side of it and the lending out of films to Societies.

"But our real function," Mr. Bell said, "is to be a buffer. If there is a grievance—if two representative branches of the industry start—er—slanging each other—we call a conference and say—'What about it, chaps?—let's smooth things over and find a common denominator.'

"No—we've no power—we're not a Government office—we're a—er—buffer."

I told Mr. Bell I could imagine him as a Minister of Films, without portfolio.

He grinned.

Asked about his qualifications for the post of General Manager, Mr. Bell shrugged—I drew this miniature 'Who's Who' from him:

O.U.D.S.—secretary. Six years producing amateur theatrical shows—"hence, you see," he said, "some knowledge of the technique of Drama."

League of Nations—prepared one of the many scenarios for a 'League' Film—to show the world the work of the League.

Attached to International Film Institute at Rome.

Parliamentary press work—parliamentary journalism——.

You can see he has administrative capacity, international knowledge—and a valuable experience of conferences.

"Tell me," I said rudely, "how did you get the job?"

Mr. Bell cocked his bowler hat at an angle as he held open the door for me.

"Oh—it—er—turned up, you know. *Tempora mutantur*——"

"And all that criticism that the Institute has come in for——" I murmured——"that difficult time it has gone through?"

"My lips are sealed." No, Mr. Bell did not actually say that. I must have imagined it. D.M.

Meetings and Acquaintances

MICKY BALCON gets the *Film Weekly* award for the production of *Thirty-nine Steps* and everyone is pleased. When the cavalcade of alien and highly decorative productions have all rode out of town and the soldiers at the Big Gate stand to a final and Royal salute, Balcon will still be around. At not quite forty he is still diffident, a little worried and not as tough as Gaumont-British and Gainsborough should have made him. For that, as well as for other reasons, he commands widespread affection throughout the film world. One day *W.F.N.* will award an even sweller prize than its respected contemporary the *Film Weekly*. That also we shall gladly present to Micky Balcon.

FRANK BADGLEY, in from Canada to shoot the Vimy ceremonial for the Canadian Government, is head of Canada's official Motion Picture Bureau. Has produced hundreds of films describing Canadian scenery and sport, and by a gift of a large quantity of his Dominion films to the E.M.B. was the real founder of the Empire Library. The thousands of teachers throughout the country who have benefited will salute the mention of his name. Badgley is a genius in contacts, knows everybody, and gets everything he wants. In a country where hospitality is a vice, will turn out any town east or west of Ottawa, to amuse the wandering stranger. Badgley plans a new series of films on Canada's interests. At long last—he promises—we are to have a film on the Canadian prairie.

RENE MAGRITTE, Belgian painter, whose works were one of the major sensations of the Surrealist Exhibition, lives in the suburbs of Brussels. On the walls of his small, typically bourgeois suburban house nightmarish, brilliantly painted canvases stare down on Saturday evening reunions of the Belgian surrealist group. His wife, dark and charming, hands out coffee. She also acts as model. Magritte plans to make surrealist films, and has already experimented on substandard film.

PROFESSOR DODDS, one of the principal figures in the Federation movement of the Film Societies, has been appointed to the Regius Professorship of Greek at Oxford, in succession to Sir Gilbert Murray. It is heard that exception to the appointment has been taken in some quarters at Oxford on the grounds that Professor Dodds was a conscientious objector and holds "advanced Left-wing views."

SZEGEDI SZUTS is back in town. Two years ago he brought to London from Hungary a sound-film cartoon about birds, which offended the Censor. He had to remove a long shot of a bird's bedroom because of the crockery under the bed. Next day he saw one of the early coloured Silly Symphonies at the Carlton, in which the air was full of winged bed-pans, flying in airforce formation. All this discouraged him, but Time the Healer has brought him back, with the complete plans for a new cartoon film in his suitcase. He may be a Hungarian, but he does have talent.

EDITORIAL

The Trade and Public Relations

A COMMITTEE of five men and one woman is taking evidence from the representatives of the British film trade. When they have heard what producers, renters and exhibitors have to say, they will advise the Government what to do with the Cinematograph Act. They will, not improbably, give continued protection to British films by making a proportion of British films compulsory in the theatres.

What we find most interesting, however, is the spirit in which some of the evidence has been laid. The representatives of the film trade have not covered themselves with honour. Question and answer have brought into the glare of public knowledge some of the most disagreeable elements in the film trade: its cut-throat money-grubbing, its ill-mannered greed, its shameless disregard of national duty.

We mention no names, for those who read the published blue books may discover them for themselves. But we hope the men responsible for our films will take warning from the performance. The vicious pursuit of profits and the defiance of ordinary social considerations may one day suggest a purge on German lines—and heaven keep us from that! An industry so intimately related to the public welfare and so deeply responsible to the public should, in self defence, keep its people in order and give evidence of a better spirit.

We suggest that the film industry follow the lead of the B.B.C. and create forthwith a Public Relations department. There is a great deal of goodwill in the film industry, lost now in the yelling bazaars of racketeering and promotion. It must be given its voice if the industry is at last to graduate from the gutter into the higher counsels of statesmanship.

Grave News for Educationists

THE SALE to America of a substantial interest in Gaumont-British is news of grave importance to educationists. At present the Gaumont-British group maintains Gaumont-British Instructional, our chief educational film unit. Its existence naturally depends on the high policies prevailing at Film House. Any change of policy which may result from American control must influence the experiments which Mr. Bruce Woolfe and Miss Field are carrying out in the provision of instructional films to schools.

We make no apology for drawing early attention to a matter of national importance. The records of American film companies in this country are well known. There has been no sign that the Imperialist film policy of America in these backward islands has been other than blatantly commercial. We fear their interest in the education of the natives may be slight.

If a sellout to America means a threat to the valuable work which Mr. Bruce Woolfe is doing, educationists may find it reasonable to petition the government to prevent a scandal.

The situation provides bitter comment on the haphazard attitude of the Board of Education to this growing branch of educational work. In the person of the late Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Ramsbotham, it has, in pious platitudes, added its blessing to the work of others.

But the fact of the matter is that the existence of the educational film now depends on the goodwill of one man, Isidore Ostrer, and is subject to every stray wind of financial manipulation. The forces of education must see to it that this situation is not prolonged.

Discipline at the B.B.C.

WAS THERE ever such cockalorum as now attends our public criticism of the B.B.C.? Like young ratters, the boys of the radio pages squeal round the local haystack, but more in hope than discovery. In the House of Commons, members, all confused, are not quite sure at what point Reith's discipline finishes and Fascism begins.

Our sophisticated readers will not, we hope, be entangled by the sillier criticisms. Much of the present noise over the B.B.C. emanates from the warring sections of the B.B.C. itself. The public prints are being used, very unfortunately, to promote sectional interests.

The libertarians and sentimentalists are all for preventing what they describe as "dictatorship" and the "coercion of staff." We ask them to consider the primary necessity of discipline in an organisation like the B.B.C.

Associated as we are with creative work of many kinds and devoted as we are, first and last, to the interests of creative workers, it may seem unusual that *W.F.N.* should take this stand. But anyone who considers the conditions under which films and broadcasts are made, will realise that the old personal attitude of the painter to his canvas and the poet to his pen, can no longer apply. We serve wide audiences and have a duty to these audiences. We work necessarily in teams or units, and loyalty and understanding within the group are vital to good work. However hard the saying may be, we stand for discipline at the B.B.C. and hope that no libertarian whimpering will be allowed to damage its efficiency.

But on a further point we differ widely from the B.B.C. We do not conceive of that efficiency as the efficiency of a machine. We conceive of it as the efficiency of a living organism in which freedom and rule are not mutually exclusive.

It will be a strange result if we secure to our B.B.C. men the right to commit adultery and forget to secure them the right of experiment, the right of trial and error and, in a far more important sphere, the right to create.

We are disappointed that

The quality of continental films in the specialised cinemas is falling so low.

There is still no sign of the development of a two-reel comedy team in Britain.

W. C. Fields has not yet recovered from his illness.

Racketeering on personal publicity is on the up-grade.

world FILM news

AUGUST 1936

Editor: MARION A. GRIERSON

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THE CHILL HAND OF CENSORSHIP

"We cannot allow ourselves to be ruled by a gang of mystery men," said H. G. Wells when the Peace Film was stopped. Here is the first public account of our mystery men: who they are and how they work. Meet the British Board of Film Censors.

Editorials

There has been a certain tendency of late to err on the side of over-caution and sometimes of inconsistency. In the recent case, for instance, of *Secret Agent*, the Censor objected to the climax of the film, in which a murder was committed. Several alternative endings were "shot," and when the film was shown in London a few weeks ago the murder was perpetrated in a manner which was true neither to the character of the murderer nor to the atmosphere of the film. Since then *Secret Agent* has been generally released throughout the country with the original ending and the Censor's blessing. Second thoughts are notoriously best; but in cases of this kind film-producers have a right to demand that the Board of Censors should think a little more quickly.—*The Times*, June 25th, 1936.

Lord Tyrrell, the Film Censor, will scarcely get many intelligent observers to agree with his view, expressed to the film exhibitors' conference at Eastbourne yesterday, that to-day's cinema needs continued repression of controversy in order to stave off disaster.—*Manchester Guardian*, June 25th, 1936.

Perhaps a younger and more quick-witted mind is needed for the post.—*The Star*, June 25th, 1936.

Is it only on the stage and in literature that we are to be allowed to have discussion of the great issues that affect the living together of men and women in community life? Is the cinema to have no Galsworthy or Shaw or Wells?—*Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, July 3rd, 1936.

Lord Tyrrell has awakened suddenly to the fact that the censor's job is not what he may have been at first inclined to think —a quiet finale to a distinguished career. Jerked to his feet by the storm over the peace film, he is opening out on what may prove to be the most difficult passage of his public service. To do him justice he speaks as though he realised the responsibility of his position. There have been new and welcome signs of the higher statesmanship at the censor office. Wardour Street has generously acknowledged them. It will register genuine pleasure if Lord Tyrrell turns out to be an active reconstructor of the whole censor position. *W.F.N.*

PASS ANY DAY down Wardour Street, and you will pass down a street bright with the colour of showmanship. Banners stream down from the roof-tops to end just above your head, gaily painted cut-outs decorate the shop windows, while the shining mechanism of brand new projectors gleams at you from the show-rooms. The street is alive.

Turn then into a certain doorway and begin to climb the cold stone stairs before you. The brilliance of the street below falls away. The atmosphere becomes obscure. You are oppressed with a sense of dank darkness. A ghostly figure peers at you from a door, flits across a landing, and is gone. Mystery and uneasiness prevail. The friendly hum of Wardour Street traffic fades to silence. You are on the threshold of the offices of the British Board of Film Censors.

And the approach to their premises is strangely symbolic of the activities of the Board. Their comings and goings are shrouded in a nimbus of obscurity. Their names are published in the Kine Year Book, but their identities and origins are veiled. They move in a mysterious way their wonders to perform.

And yet this shadow cabinet of elderly men and women has struck widespread and paralysing inhibitions into the heart of the film industry. Script conferences in the studios debate their reaction to dialogue; directors on the floor are pulled up short in rehearsal by the whispered warning of "censor"; even the hard-boiled executives of Wardour Street shake anxious heads over action and gesture which approaches the borderline of the Board's sacred "categories." There are stories of inconsistency and misjudgment. Yet at the request to bring complaint and grievance into the open, deep calls hush to deep, the stories temporarily cease to circulate and an uncomfortable silence prevails until the menace of publicity is past. In plain words, Wardour Street is scared stiff of the Censor.

It is time to tear away the obscurity and the fear with which the operations of the censor-board are surrounded, and to reveal it for what it is—a body throttling a young and vital medium with a set of standards drawn from an age of water-colours and draped piano-legs.

The B.B.F.C. is appointed by the Kinematograph Renters' Society and the Kinematograph Manufacturers' Association. Its president must be approved by the Home Office. It has no official standing whatever such as that held by the Lord Chamberlain. It is backed by no higher authority, and a clause in the contract signed by the submitter of a film expressly forbids him to seek redress elsewhere should the Board reject his film.

Its limits are set by its own discretion. Yet its constitution involves no loyalty except to the bodies who elect and pay its members. It is responsible neither to the government nor to the public.

Who then are the men who wield this supreme power over every film of importance shown in Great Britain, and who are answerable for their actions to no one in particular? We will not delve into the past, except to mention two ex-presidents, Mr. T. P. O'Connor and Mr. Edward Shortt, K.C. Mr. O'Connor was paralysed from the waist down during the last years of his presidency, and throughout the whole of this later period saw two films, "Mother" and "Martin Luther." Mr. Shortt expired at over eighty, censoring films to the last.

The present staff includes the following persons :—

PRESIDENT: LORD TYRRELL OF AVON. He will shortly be seventy. He has enjoyed a distinguished diplomatic career. He was for eight years private secretary to Sir Edward Grey. He prepared the British case at the Peace Conference and was Minister Plenipotentiary at Versailles. From 1928 to 1934 he was British Ambassador in Paris.

Lord Tyrrell is a Roman Catholic. Concerning his appointment as Film Censor the *Daily Express* wrote: "The fact that he is a member of the Roman Catholic Church is significant. The recent purity campaign which swept the studios of Hollywood and changed the whole trend of film-making throughout the world was initiated by the Vatican."

VICE-PRESIDENT: COLONEL JOHN CONNOR HANNA, D.S.O. Col. Hanna is approximately 65. He served with distinction during the War, gained the Croix de Guerre, and was three times mentioned in dispatches. He was a member of the Expeditionary Force to Ireland during the "Troubles" in that country in 1918. His club is the Army and Navy.

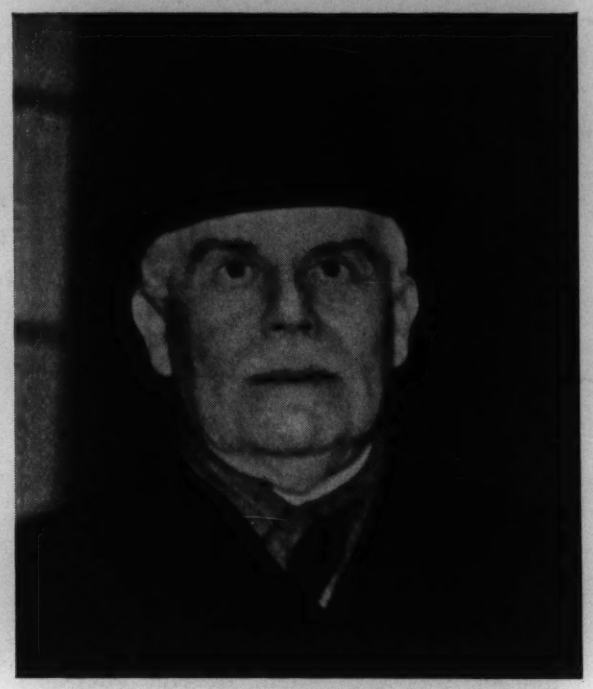
SECRETARY: MR. J. BROOKE WILKINSON. His age is not known, but he has boasted of his acquaintance with John Ruskin (died 1900). His salary is, we hear, £1,500 a year, and he is also the salaried secretary of the Kinematograph Manufacturers' Association.

Mr. Wilkinson has served the Censor Board for many years. Until quite recently it was known that he suffered from serious eye trouble. This minor drawback is, however, compensated for by his refusal to attend a performance of the London Film Society on the grounds that it took place on Sunday.

MAJOR HARDING DE FONBLANQUE COX, LL.B. This picturesque figure, suffering on his own admission from "a peculiar form of lethargica" is a recent appointment to the Board at the age of 81. "Who's Who" records that Major Cox's recreations include hunting, coursing, angling, shooting, race-riding and sculling; that he is an ex-M.F.H. of two packs; that he has won many shooting trophies; that he was specially invited by the Austrian Government to inspect and report on the fisheries of Bosnia and Herzgovina in 1897; that he is a judge at the Crystal Palace, Birmingham, Cruft's, and all principal dog shows and that he is a life member of the Garrick and

Miss Rosamund Smith

Brooke Wilkinson



Lord Tyrrell

" It is Impertinent to take our Likenesses " (Brooke Wilkinson)

Leander Clubs. His Publications include *Coursing, Chasing and Racing, A Sportsman at Large, Yarns without Yawns, Fugleman the Foxhound, Dogs, Dogs and I, Dogs of Today*. He was at one time Kennel Editor of the *Illustrated and Sporting Dramatic News*. His musical publications include *Air Marshal* (March), *United Empire* (March), *For King and Country* (Grand March), and *Wong* (Chinese Patrol). He is the originator of a scheme, submitted to the Home Office in 1918, for the gradual extermination of mongrels. *The Daily Express* recently reported him as saying "The mongrel has no right to be born. He is an offence to public decency."

Major Cox is now an umpire of public decency on the screen. Plentiful references to his excellence as a judge of dogs (with a penchant for patriotic music) indeed exist; but no reference to his special competence as a judge of films can be traced.

Miss Myson. This Miss Myson is a living example of the obscurity with which the Board is surrounded. Wardour Street, gloomily conscious of her existence, has dubbed her "the old woman." Beyond that she is a complete enigma.

From this catalogue of a selection from the Board's staff certain illluminating facts emerge. We will examine these facts, bearing in mind that these persons, together with their colleagues, enjoy supreme power over every important film to be shown on the British screens.

1. The combined ages of five of them alone must total over three hundred years. At least three are long past the age at which many professional men are required to retire. Yet these persons whose acquisitive years were spent in the horse age have somehow found authority over an industry built on young ideas and dependent for its vitality on the use of machinery and a modern creative outlook.

2. Three of them are recruited from the Army and the Foreign Office. They bear an unmistakable social stamp. They are drawn from a small and exclusive class. One of them is a Roman Catholic. Their whole training, conscious and subconscious, represents a limitation, when it is considered that the cinema's vast audiences comprise citizens of every social, political and religious denomination in the country.

3. Though mystery surrounds the achievements of the Board's staff in cultural spheres, one point appears to emerge. The Board as a whole boasts relatively few of the accepted insignia of learning. Glance at the records of members of the film industry and you will find a formidable array of academic distinction. But it seems that in the one branch of the film trade where powers of social interpretation are of first importance there is not, as far as can be ascertained, a single medical or psychological degree or any considerable body of experience which would appear to be particularly adapted to the social problems of cinema. And yet these people are daily concerned not only with expert instructional films, but with the psychological emotions and the physical reactions of millions.

We will now examine the B.B.F.C. at work as a body and glance at some of the more significant inconsistencies it has managed to achieve.

It has already been made clear that the Board has no responsibility save to the Trade. The Government is in the fortunate position of being able to dissociate itself from the Censor's decisions at a moment's notice. There is no obligation to refer to public opinion. Its only commission is, broadly, to safeguard the interests of the Trade. It is wonderfully free from departmental and official restrictions and is in a position to use this freedom to co-operate with creative men in an intelligent development of cinema. Lord Tyrrell even raised hopes of such a co-operation by saying that "the same licence should be granted to the cinema industry as is granted to other forms of dramatic art." But he straightway added "always bearing in mind the crucial fact that the cinema caters for millions, whereas all other forms of art cater for thousands." This statement, to put it politely, stinks of something particularly abhorrent to the decent British citizen—"one law for the rich and another for the poor." It is by no means the kind of statement Lord Tyrrell should sponsor.

Here are just two examples of the "prohibited categories," and of their application to actual cases.

1. It is prohibited to show men and women in bed together. By what right does the censor imply 'prurient' interpretation of each and every of such scenes? And yet when a case arises of the very 'prurience' which he wishes to ban, this same censor approves it. In the film *State Fair* the younger son is seen in shadowgraph in bed with a woman (not his wife). By what irresponsibility is licence of this kind extended to one film and not another?

2. It is prohibited to show themes likely to wound the just susceptibilities of a friendly nation. An elastic category, and the elasticity has been turned to account. A short film was made calling attention to the continued imprisonment in Germany of Thaelmann without a charge. It was called *Free Thaelmann*. The censor first pointed out that the film came within another category forbidding the depiction of the lives of notorious criminals. For, argued the censor, since Thaelmann has been long in prison, he must be a criminal. The publisher replied that Thaelmann had been in gaol for three years without trial, whereat the censor proudly announced that such a thing could not happen in a civilised country, and banned the film as being "unfriendly to Germany." Shades of Morton's Fork!

The feelings of the men who are compelled to deal with this kind of difficulty may be imagined. But the normal "troubles with the censor," the hindrance, the obstruction, the wearisome moralising, the eternal reminders that pregnant women may miscarry when subjected to shock, are not the only matters that bother the Wardour Street men. It is commonly said that those who are prepared to raise hell over what they consider an unjust decision can get away with far more than, for instance, the representatives of foreign

These photographs were taken outside the Censor's Office. The Board refused to identify them. Are they Censors?

firms who are not conversant with the methods of the Board. It is even maintained that one American firm gets away with "almost anything," while two of its rivals have constant difficulty. Such feeling does not add to the dignity of the Board.

Let us now turn to what is possibly the most notorious of the Board's actions, and study the facts in some detail. When the present re-armament programme was announced, a group of film-workers pooled their resources and made a three-minute film pleading for peace. On March 27th of this year the film was sent to the censor for the usual examination. On April 3rd the producers were notified in writing that the Board had taken exception to the film, but that the secretary would be pleased to discuss the matter with them.

At the subsequent interview the producers' representative was told that exception had been taken on the grounds first that the film was controversial, and second that it had been suggested that certain of the war scenes in the film were the property of the War Office. The secretary intimated his intention of submitting the film to the War Office in order to ascertain whether this material was or was not its property.

Three days later the producers' representative again interviewed the secretary of the Board. It was then stated that no decision had been reached, but that the film was being submitted to the War Office. If the War Office gave permission for its material to be used, or, if the War Office could say that the scenes in question were not its property, then the Board would consider granting it a certificate. This procedure, it was stated, might take some time. The secretary was thereupon informed that the producers were anxious to release the film as soon as possible owing to its topicality (the White Paper on armaments had recently appeared). Mr. Wilkinson expressed incredulous surprise that there should be "any hurry over a short film."

Two interesting points arise from these interviews. In concerning itself with the origin of the material contained in the film the Board appointed itself guardian of copyright. There is no particular reason why it should not do so, since by its constitution it can do almost anything it likes. But it is highly doubtful whether there is a single occasion on record prior to this case on which the censor has interested himself in film copyright. An authority on the subject has recently made the illuminating remark that if the B.B.F.C. considered the checking of copyright as one of its duties it would need a permanent staff of some five hundred persons to deal with musical questions alone. Why then this sudden and lively concern for other people's copyright? Second point; it is a fact, well known by all conversant with such matters, that questions of Crown copyright are the business of the Controller of the Stationery Office. Mr. Wilkinson, with his years of experience of the film industry, must have known this; yet he stated that he was referring the film to the *War Office* to get the copyright question settled. Why did he make this statement, when it afterwards transpired that the film was never seen by the War Office at all?

On the morning of April 7th the producers, dissatisfied with their treatment at the hands of the censor, informed the Press of the situation. The next morning, April 8th, the Press informed the country. At a few minutes before noon on this same day (April 8th) a reporter on the staff of a respected provincial newspaper spoke to one of the producers. The Board's secretary, he said, had just previously told him by 'phone that a certificate for the Peace Film was at that moment being written out. The producers, however, were not informed by the Board of the granting of the certificate until a 'phone message came through from the B.B.F.C. during the afternoon to tell them that the certificate was waiting at the Board's office should they care to call for it.

Now Lord Tyrrell said in his speech at the June conference of the C.E.A.: "As a matter of fact the certificate was issued for the film the day before the attacks were made in the Press." The Press was told the story on April 7th. The certificate was given to the producers on April 8th, and according to the Board's secretary was also written out on April 8th. What is the explanation?

★ ★ ★

"The ways of the censor are indeed inscrutable."—Lord Cecil.

★ ★ ★

A.C.T. Resolution

Resolution passed unanimously by the General Council of the Association of Cine-Technicians following Lord Tyrrell's speech at the June conference of the C.E.A.:

"That the Council of the Association of Cine-Technicians takes grave exception to the views expressed by Lord Tyrrell, President of the British Board of Film Censors, to the conference of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association as reported in the Press. The council holds no brief for any particular political belief whatsoever, but it must none the less sternly resist any tendency to deprive those working in the field of cinematography of the right which they should enjoy as British citizens, the right of expression in their chosen field of any view not inconsistent with the law. The attempt to limit the function of cinematography exclusively to entertainment is outside the province and duties of censorship; if successful, it will establish the cinema, *per se*, as inferior in social value to literature and the other arts and thereby degrade the status of the technicians who devote their lives to it.

"The elimination from cinematograph subject material of every controversial question deprives the cinema of the possibility of playing any useful part in the life of the nation, and will have the effect of holding it permanently at that 'nickelodeon' level from which the skill of generations of technicians has raised it to the heights of an art unlimited in potentiality. The underlying assumption that British audiences are incapable of witnessing material with which they disagree without riot is, further, an insult to the British people which, as citizens, the council must strongly repudiate."

THE CENSORS: A FORCE FOR GOOD?

This article is contributed by a prominent Wardour Street personality. "W.F.N." is informed that it expresses the views of many film people who are prevented, for obvious reasons, from associating their names with criticism of a Censor Board that is supported by their own organisations.

IS THE PRESENT system of film censorship a good one?

That is the sort of question that seemingly intelligent people will make a serious attempt to answer with a plain "yes" or "no."

Somebody recently published this little problem:

"*In a certain village, the local barber shaved all of those individuals, and only those individuals, that did not shave themselves. Did he shave himself?*"

After you have pondered over that puzzle for a few minutes, you will come to the conclusion that there is a catch in it. Of course there is. The catch is in the original proposition, which is self-contradictory. But notice, that had the postulate been advanced without being followed by the question, you would have been prepared to accept it without comment. Only when a question arises is the fallacy exposed.

The present system of film censorship was instituted by the Trade when it was found that a number of exhibitors were making money by showing the public what a large section of the public most wanted to see, namely, naughty pictures. The people, having been sex-starved from their youth up (thanks to that system of inhibitions collectively known as Victorianism) found in the new moving pictures a method of psychic gratification not until then within reach.

The Trade's objection to this was not at all a moral one: it was purely commercial. The pictures were getting a bad name. Cautious mammas were forbidding their daughters to look at them. The box office was menaced.

In a spirit of self-protection, the Trade set up a voluntary censorship.

That censorship, contrary to the opinion of the critics, carried out its job with the most extreme efficiency. The censors recognised at the outset that to earn their money they must be effective. They made themselves effective by announcing their existence to the licensing authorities, and persuading those authorities that they—the Censors—were a Force for Good.

Potent word! The licensing authorities, armed with full powers to close any cinema down and deprive the proprietor of his livelihood, accepted the censorship with the greatest readiness. Many of them made it a licence condition that no film might be shown unless it carried the censors' certificate, or at least had the special permission of the Authority.

The censors, financially supported by the Trade and presumably servants of the Trade, were thus put in the powerful position of masters. It was true the Trade paid them; but the licensing authorities gave them the power; and if it ever came to a show-down, the Trade would find them in a formidable position.

Fortunately, that is the last thing in the minds of the Trade, for the reason that the censors are excellent for their job. They were employed to protect the Trade from box-office loss; and they carry out their work with the utmost singleness of purpose.

The result is, that nothing reaches the screen which can by any stretch of the imagination be expected to give offence to anybody. Mothers may allow their daughters to visit the cinemas regularly, with complete assurance that said daughters will see nothing at all that can possibly do them any harm. Daughters can allow their mothers the same freedom, knowing that any stray *double entendres* that haply may have escaped the keen ears of the censors will be above their heads. It is all very pleasant.

And now to look for a moment at the simple philosophy by which so much good work is guided to its triumphant conclusion. "*Not to give offence*": that is the law.

And a very good, courteous, middle-class-parlour law it is. But stay a moment! What is it, in fact, that can or might give offence?

The statement of any idea which runs counter to ideas we have hitherto held. The presentation of any condition not harmonious with the conditions we have learned to accept as right and proper.

These are the things that give offence. If I am a Conservative, and a Socialist canvasser calls on me just before an election, it offends me, and I have hard work to prevent myself showing it: the man has insulted my intelligence. If I happen to be a Wearer of Symbolic Underlinen, I shall probably get out my rubber truncheon, or make a mental note of the man's address for future reference at a time when the rubber truncheon shall have become an accepted institution. No man, I should tell myself, should be allowed to offer his insulting creed with impunity.

As a devout Catholic, I am insulted when an agnostic tells me that transubstantiation is either nonsense or cannibalism. As a good Victorian, I am insulted when an exhibitionist makes a public parade of urinating. In fact, they call it "insulting behaviour" when in the law courts.

As a firm believer in Astrology, naturally I should be insulted by the narrow-minded doubts of the mathematician. Twenty-five years ago I was insulted by the blasphemous aeroplane ("if God had wanted man to fly, He would have given him wings"); and if I am not insulted by the fact of wireless it must be because the effect of so many subsequent inventions have made me a little senile. New ideas of any sort are always insulting to somebody; and the nearer the truth they happen to be, the more insulting they become.

It naturally follows that the fifteen million fans who make twenty million visits each week to the cinemas, cannot be kept from insult except by the process of purging the screen of every idea whatever. We know that if you express a new idea, somebody is bound to be offended; consequently the censor is happiest with those films that haven't a single new idea from one end to the other.

The films that try to say something, on the contrary, give him a headache. He sees the cloven hoof of controversy.

Consequently, we find films like the 300-foot peace film held up and in grave danger of being banned altogether. The censor's explanation that the delay in certification was due to some doubt about copyright is merely ridiculous. Far better for the censor to have said frankly: "The film was controversial: it would have offended the armament manufacturers."

The actual composition of the Board of Censors has been criticised because of the considerable age of the examiners. This is an absurd attitude. The older the examiners, the more certain are they to recognise a new idea the moment it appears on the screen. Show them anything which is not strictly in accordance with accepted traditions and they are instantly alert.

It is not to be wondered at that after so long this attitude of "avoid controversy" should have become accepted as the "right and proper" attitude. It is not really surprising therefore that a couple of years ago, when the Trade was campaigning against the entertainment tax, a local licensing authority should have made an unforeseen decision: The Trade had prepared some short films appealing to the public to support the campaign for cheaper seats. *One County Council notified the licencees that these films were not to be shown.*

That was a direct result of the training of the Trade's "non-controversial" system of censorship.

It is not to be thought that this system eliminates propaganda from the screen altogether. By no means. A film is non-controversial provided it accepts the existing standards. Thus, capitalism, marriage-before-babies, keeping on the left side of the street, crossing the fingers when passing under ladders, religion according to the Book of Common Prayer, the heroic side of a war of aggression, and the opinions of the Conservative Member in the latest by-election are all right and proper subjects for the screen. . . .

. . . An enormous up-bolstering of the crazy, fantastic, complex nightmare of contradictory politics, dark-age religion, snobbery, superstition, greed, and race prejudice which constitutes our present civilisation, and distinguishes that noble creature Man from those lowly and rather smelly beings, the Beasts of the Field.

By so doing, the system of censorship ensures the Trade an average weekly attendance of nearly twenty million.

And after that, you are thoughtless enough to ask "Is the present system a good one?"

English films are content to skim the surface of English life. I do not know whether this comes from fear of the Censor or from a temporary lack of courage and enterprise on the part of the producers, who feel less sure of themselves than the old hands in Hollywood.

But I wish one of them would come out with something hot and strong on the radical side (if he wants my assistance he can have it), so that we could make a test case of it with the Censor. It is monstrous that I should be allowed to print and broadcast opinions that must not find any expression in films, and that picture theatres, where most of our people go for their entertainment, should continue to be the sacred and not-to-be-defiled temples of the established order of loot and mass murder.—J. B. Priestley in the *Star*, July 3rd, 1936.

LOUIS GOLDING
discusses novel and film technique

Louis Golding, novelist, boxing-fan and connoiseur of the arts, has just returned from Hollywood.

Golding is unique in that he is the only novelist who takes boxing really seriously. He writes up big fights for the "Star."

He is keenly interested in the problems of film-making and his novel, *Magnolia Street*, has been acquired by Gaumont-British.

Louis Golding strides from corner to corner of his workroom. For the moment it is the ring, and the fight is billed Novel *v.* Film. Uninvited I take the role of referee, but Golding will have none of it. I take a ring-side seat, and the bell rings.

First round:

"The writer whose treatment of Character and situation is filmic is lucky. Take Tom Jones as an example of a good novel and a bad scenario, or any of Marcel Proust's novels. While Marcel Proust's novels are quite the worst from a film point of view, Ben Hecht's would be the best. All the rest of us lie between.

"David Selznick told me that Ben Hecht submitted a script written overnight and it required no alteration whatever. To his knoweldge this has been the only phenomenon of its kind in Hollywood.

"A new sort of novel may be created by novelists whose gifts are of the nature of Ben Hecht's. These novels would be at the same time readable and feasible as scenarios. It is unlikely that this sort of novel should supplant the old because the old novel will continue to satisfy a demand that cannot be satisfied by the screen.

* * *

Second round:

"Two things the novel can do and the cinema cannot:

(1) The novel can describe slow becomings and slow ceasings. It is interested in processes. Both film and the drama are interested in results.

(2) Those things most important to a novel are, so to speak, "on stage." In drama and the film these things are "off stage."

"My sort of novels, for example *The Miracle Boy* and *Five Silver Daughters*, are interested in the influence of background on the actors whether it be landscape or industry. In film the nearest approach to dealing with a slow development of this kind has been in the early Russian films and in some of the present documentaries. But films cannot do this so well; they must be primarily interested in *results*. In *Drifters* the adjustment of the actors to a storm is shown. A novel would not only show this but would show the character development in the actors which has led to that particular form of adjustment.

* * *

Third round:

"The novelist can learn a great deal from the economy of film dialogue, and economy is a supreme virtue. I don't mean that good film dialogue will be good novel dialogue. In a novel that whole swing and tempo is dependent on the use of dialogue, but in film, dialogue belongs *to the instant*. Witness the use of wisecracks in the American film. (In the English film one feels the lack of efficient wisecracks, and when they do make the attempt the results are so lamentable that one shudders with shame.)

"The good novelist's instinctive sense of character should be useful to film, especially as he has centuries of experience behind him. But even in the best films, characters are liable to behave in a way which to the novelist is preposterous. The novelist, too, can produce an infinite diversity of character where the film cannot. The star system tends to flatten out the character to fit a mould: whether it be the mould of a Spencer Tracy or a Sylvia Sydney. The work of Paul Muni is an exception, for Muni's character changes completely with every film: he is always completely himself."

The fourth bell had rung but Golding paid no attention. Novel and Film retired to their corners. Golding is an ardent Muni fan and, once on the subject, he refused to be side-tracked.

Of Muni he writes in *Photoplay:*

"I think the greatness of Muni belongs primarily to himself; no director, no scenarist, no cameraman, no soundman has had very much to do with it. It consists of a certain iron integrity combined with a certain delicate sensitiveness which can't be built up from outside. It must develop from within. . . . Muni said that he could not work outside the limits of a fiery an almost tough, realism. 'I like something I can get my teeth into,' he said, 'something I can get hold of and pull at with all ten fingers till the jaw stiffens and the tendons stand out on my forehead.'

"That, of course, is the sort of part he has done incomparably well in *Scarface* and *Black Fury* and *I Was a Fugitive from a Chain-Gang*. But I am quite certain he is setting his limitations too close. He has already shown what suavity and subtlety he is capable of, in the *Life of Louis Pasteur*, though even there he is still acting within the framework of a certain intellectual realism. I should like to see him take wings into the world of imagination, to enter into the ether till now occupied almost exclusively by actors like Conrad Veidt, Charles Laughton and Werner Krauss."

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DENIS MYERS meets MR. MESSEL

IN A WHITEWASHED STUDIO off Knightsbridge lives a dangerous young man.

He smiles, but he is not amused. He hesitates, almost stammers as he speaks, but there is no indecision about what he thinks.

He has ideas—he is dangerous.

He is restless, he squats on the floor and then leaps up again, but there is repose in his mind.

He is no respecter of persons. Dukes, film stars, children, charwomen, are alike to him.

He is dangerous.

He has a charming and efficient secretary, and a charming (and efficient?) disarray in his studio. His masks, models and medieval designs mingle oddly with a modern cocktail cabinet, a 'precious' collection of bric-a-brac, a cluster of hot-house flowers—in a tin kitchen-jug.

He has been the innocent cause of friction in Hollywood, and the not-so-innocent power that is influencing autumn fashions in two continents.

A dangerous young man—Oliver Messel.

He likes Hollywood. He likes the people, the sun, the go-getting air about the place, the atmosphere of intrigue.

An anachronism, Mr. Messel, with his medieval knowledge, his medieval designs, his medieval love of intrigue, and his frankly avowed liking for gangster films.

But his *Romeo and Juliet* dress designs have been aped by the fashion arbiters of the world for modern woman.

When he left Hollywood a newspaper 'splashed' him as a 'disillusioned Briton.'

Oliver Messel laughed. "Nothing of the sort," he told me. "We were all very friendly. I liked Hollywood. And Adrian was charming—in spite of——"

"A spot of bother?" I suggested. "Jealousy?"

Dangerous young men are wary.

"Nothing personal," said Oliver, smiling (dangerously). "But when I got there Adrian was away on holiday. As you know he does all the gowns for M.G.M. And when he came back and found I was doing the *Romeo and Juliet* designs, there was one of those Hollywood flare-ups.

"Cukor refused to carry on unless my contract was worked out. There was a danger of the whole production collapsing.

"And then—well, the trouble all faded out. Adrian did a little—I did a lot.

"But there are two things in the film that aren't mine, and I *would* like that made clear. The balcony scene, and Juliet's ballroom dress.

"They may be historically authentic, but they're not my conception. After all, Adrian is one artist—I am another. We have different conceptions."

Filmgoers will perhaps be able to judge for themselves where the artistic temperaments have clashed. They will not, however, have any grounds for complaint on a question of authenticity, for Messel spent over four months going round Italy, studying detail, atmosphere, delving into queer sources of information to get his background correct.

Then, soaked in the period, he deliberately forgot his knowledge, and made his drawings.

How peculiarly adaptable his art is to the screen will be seen in the film, for though the designs are in colour, the camera-shots bring out every gradation of tone, and it is, of course, not a colour film.

But Messel's colourings are so delicate, the drawings almost strike you as done in black and white.

Messel, costume designer for "Romeo and Juliet" says: "Adrian is one artist—I am another"

Naturally this young man had something to say about colour.

"At present," he said, "colour films are only a medium for the crudest work. I'm glad *Romeo and Juliet* wasn't done in colour.

"Oleograph appeal," he argued, "is not worth cultivating."

"Do you think *Romeo and Juliet* is going to be a box-office success?" I asked.

"I do. It's got movement—romance—it's beautifully acted. Personally——" the smile broke out again—"I like gangster films, and continental ones."

Oliver sighed. "I wish someone would do for England what Rene Clair did for France," he said.

"He almost did it for Scotland, in *The Ghost Goes West*. But what a field there is in England—Limehouse, the slums—quaint rustic corners—not a medium for me, of course. I'd go and see the film though."

He got up from the divan with seventeen pink cushions on it. (I counted them.)

"Tell me," I said, "Did you find Hollywood as crude, as naïve as it's supposed to be?"

He shook his head. "It's just as intellectual as British filmland," he said, without a blush; "more so, perhaps. Of course, everyone talks nothing but films. It's on a different plane, a bit crazy.

"But I'll tell you one queer thing—in England the cameramen, technicians, executives on the sets, are mostly American—at any rate, they have American accents.

"In Hollywood they're nearly all English and Scottish. Prophets who have not honour in their own country. . . ."

As I shook hands with him beside the mantelpiece with a skull scrawled on it, Messel told me a word or two of his plans: he hopes to do a film for Reinhardt, hopes to go back to Hollywood—may go to Vienna—Germany.

HEDDA HOPPER
meets Mr. Myers

Hedda—great personality—and best dressed woman in Hollywood.

HEDDA HOPPER came out of the lift at the Savoy with a smile in her eyes—a smile in her voice—and the queerest hat I had ever seen. (*She* called it amusing.)

Hedda Hopper—best-dressed woman in Hollywood——

She had an electric vitality that set you tingling—and the only American accent that lends a charm to the English language.

She bought stamps—"Lucky Strikes"—tea—waved to a film director—compared the hotel lobby to Grand Central Station—reduced the head-waiter to servility—and introduced half-a-dozen people to each other—all in a breath—in that American tempo which, without being in itself breathless, leaves you gasping.

They call her "Everybody's pal" in Hollywood. Whether she's selling real estate—starring in radio, films or theatre—whether she's being as crazy as the film colony or as "county" as the City Fathers—everyone likes Hedda.

And to her schoolboy son's pals she is just "Bill's mother."

We exhausted English weather, our wonderful English policemen, our too-cute politicians. We came to films.

Hedda has no superiority complex about the Hollywood product. She adores British actors and actresses. (She thinks there is no one like Edith Evans—Laughton is a little god—Nova Pilbeam 'swell.")

"If they'd quicken up the tempo of British films," she told me, "they'd produce marvellous films.

"As it is—well, you *find* the stars—we *make* them."

"Laughton was grand in *Henry VIII*, but look what he's done since. Look at Merle Oberon. . . .

"You've not many good juveniles, though——

"But your English censorship——"

Hedda nearly grimaced.

"Oh yes—we've got Will Hays—and I had a story I was going to tell on Ruby Vallee's 'hook-up' cut—I'll tell it you in a minute—but the things you miss——

"Now you don't let Royalty be portrayed on stage or film," went on Hedda disgustedly. "And running in New York is *the* finest play—about your Queen Victoria—and you've got to go to America to see it!

"It was Mae West who put the censorship into the movies, you know," she added.

"But what really gets me about British films is, how you can make them pay," she said shrewdly.

"Do you mean they're so bad?"

"I should say not—don't get me wrong," protested Hedda. "But you turn out so few. You've the most marvellous studios, buildings and equipment—those I've seen—but you've got to turn out a lot of pictures like we do to make them pay.

"And you only do four or five a year. How is it going to pay dividends?"

I wondered, too.

"You keep stars waiting doing nothing on big salaries, too," she said. "Oh—I know Hollywood does the same, but look at the number of pictures. we turn out.

"Yes, some *are* bad—that's the trouble of 'block booking'—the exhibitors have got to take them.

"There is a great regard for the British in Hollywood," Hedda told me.

"When your King George died, all the British actors wore black ties—the actresses went into mourning. And a good many Americans did likewise.

"Some were more British than the British," she chuckled.

English have a love for the stage, Hedda thinks, that will never die.

She has a tremendous admiration for the "Old Vic"—for Laughton in throwing up huge salaries to go back and perfect his art there.

"We have that love in America, too," she said, "and though Box Office is the prime factor everywhere, classics will always be staged and screened."

"And that old fetish of star names?"

Hedda sighed. "You've got to have 'em," she said.

"Of course there are the 'freak' successes. The 'Quins' film. . . . You heard Mrs. Pat Campbell's comment?

"When she heard the sum that 20th Century-Fox was paying to film those babes, Mrs. Pat exploded.

" 'What! All that money for a Canadian farmer's mistake!' she said, 'and there are hundreds of great artists starving to death in Hollywood.' "

"I'll tell you another story, too," said Hedda, "which will sum up Hollywood for you.

"Henri Bernstein, famous French playwright, was asked at a dinner if he could give in a few words his impressions of Hollywood.

" 'One word will do,' he said: 'fear.' "

"And that's true," said Hedda. "Everyone's ruled by fear. Directors are afraid they'll lose their jobs. Stars are afraid someone else will eclipse them, everyone's afraid of everyone else. . . .

"Of scandal, too. Why, if a man's seen out with a girl three times he's got to marry her!

"And people who call on others leave their cars around corners and in different streets so that they shan't be traced by their registration numbers.

"Some of the stars 'go simple' to escape attention.

"Hence Joan Crawford's all-white car—with 'fire-sign' (which gets you through anywhere)—white-liveried chauffeur—and Joan—in white.

"She didn't want to be noticed," said Hedda quietly.

"Afraid," I agreed.

There are other things stars are "afraid" of, too, in Hollywood. Those child stars.

"Shirley Temple, Hollywood's biggest money-maker," said Hedda, "is unspoilt but——feared.

"You see," she explained, "she knows her part after the first reading, and her very assurance dries-up the others. Then . . . she prompts them . . . and after two or three goes of that they're just all of a dither.

"But she's cute—and so is Jane Withers.

"Then there's the fear of being in a bad picture. You've no idea what that can do to a star.

"I was talking to a little Australian girl—she told me their favourite 'down under' was Norma Shearer."

"But what about Joan Crawford?" asked Hedda.

"Oh," said the girl, "we haven't been to see her since *Rain*."

"*Sic transit gloria stellae*," I said.

Hedda nodded, pulled out her compact, adjusted the "amusing" hat, tugged at the jacket (by Adrian).

"Well, one mustn't be indiscreet. I'm afraid I must be going," she said. "When do you want to interview me?"

"I have," I said.

The head-waiter motioned to his satellites to clear up the tea-cup that crashed on the floor.

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REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by H. E. Blyth

Review of the Month

THE STORY OF LOUIS PASTEUR. (William Dieterle—Warner.)

So great is the honourable contrast between this film and the ordinary clap-trap of the screen, that it is hard to praise it with that persuasive moderation which alone will ensure it the public it deserves—a public of men and women (with, certainly, their children) who, sickened long ago by the wild superlatives of film criticism, have come to regard cinematograph theatres as places where all values are falsified and where little more can be hoped for than relatively harmless triviality. *Pasteur* stands apart. As technical experiment, it is of no importance whatever. Though its production, which is American, is admirably competent, no one will go to it for the sake of dazzling spectacle, daring fantasy, or exceptional lighting and rhythm. That is not its purpose. Its purpose is to relate, without affectation and without the throwing out of sops to fools, the story of Louis Pasteur's single-handed struggle for scientific truth. To some the emphasis may seem to rest on the word "scientific," but the full value of Pasteur's life and of this account of it is not perceived unless his science be regarded as the splendid occasion, but still only the occasion, of his single-mindedness and courage. What he did mattered greatly to the world; what he was mattered more; and it is the rare virtue of this film that, while it makes of his actions, his discoveries, his perils, and his triumphs an enthralling narrative, it yet contrives by the simplicity of its treatment to enable his spiritual force to outshine his material achievement. It is for this reason that the film, which might have been no more than a glorification of a brilliant chemist, will move profoundly men and women so varied in outlook and knowledge that they have little in common but their fellowship in what Dostoevsky called "suffering humanity."

There are passages which suggest that the stubborn enmity of Pasteur's orthodox opponents has been exaggerated. The prejudice certainly existed; the expression of it was fierce and sometimes unscrupulous; but the story would have been improved if the conservative doctors had been given credit at least for a little more *finesse*. Probably this crudeness was admitted in order to make clear the steps in Pasteur's advance and the nature of his struggle. Certainly it throws Mr. Paul Muni's portrait of the great chemist into relief. His experiments in the treatment of anthrax, the tests he was compelled to undergo, his later research into rabies among animals and human beings, and his final vindication—all these are clearly described as part of a coherent and swiftly progressive narrative, and all are subordinated to a study of the man's unpretentious, unswerving, and unspectacularly heroic mind. Mr. Muni acts, if one may put it so, independently of the limelight, seeming always to care for the truth he is expressing and never for what hysterical admirers may think of him; and Miss Anita Louise, as Mme. Pasteur, is likewise never a film star, but is content to communicate steadily the love and loyalty and admiration of a woman of character. The result is a film which cannot be watched without deep and, in a special sense, proud emotion. It tells of a man whose life was valuable and triumphant because it was neither greedy nor divided nor afraid, and that, in the contemporary world, is a rare and welcome theme for biography.

—*The Times*

PASTEUR

The Pasteur film offers unusual excitement. Here is a film which might easily have been made by the *March of Time*. It re-enacts an actual story. It describes with all the authenticity of documentary evidence a fighting issue of modern history. It is, with its story of Pasteur's researches into microbes and vaccines, dramatic to the point of poignancy. It mixes the classic ingredients of pity and terror and resolves them in a heroic portrait of self-sacrifice and achievement.

But the staggering thing for a Hollywood picture is that the drama is taken out of the fact. The drama is rooted in the scientific issue behind. The episodes take their life from the paraphernalia and the patience of research. It is the first film from Hollywood which has dropped the formula of theatrical back cloth and opened a dramatic window on the world of actuality. As such this is a historic achievement.

It will have imitators and not all will appreciate the revolutionary principle which is involved. Some will. The documentary men have shouted for this for ten years and will very rightly claim it as their own. Here, resplendent in Hollywood dressing and vitalised by a great actor, is a film which is own-brother to the *Contacts* and the *Aero Engines*. W.F.N.

FURY. (Fritz Lang—M.G.M.)

Fury, the story of how a mob in a small southern town lynches an innocent man who has been arrested under suspicion of kidnapping, is astonishing, the only film I know to which I have wanted to attach the epithet of "great." Mr. Spencer Tracy as the victim; Miss Sylvia Sidney as his girl; Mr. Edward Ellis as the sheriff, harsh, upright, ready to defend his prisoner to the last tear-gas bomb: all these give their finest performances. Miss Sidney in particular. She has never more deeply conveyed the pain and inarticulacy of tenderness. No film passion here, no exaggeration of the ordinary human feeling: it is the ordinary recognisable agony, life as one knows it is lived. And the same power to catch vividly the truthful detail makes the lynching of almost unbearable horror.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

So *Fury* becomes, both as propaganda and entertainment, no dialectical protest against the immorality of lynching. Lynching has been, indeed, in American history just as often theoretically a moral act undertaken by clans and vigilantes rising up from the people against lawless minorities. But where *Fury* passes superbly beyond the apt melodrama of *Barbary Coast* and *Frisco Kid* and even *The Birth of a Nation* is in exhibiting (through Fritz Lang's direction) and diagnosing (through Krasna's dogging script) the kind of emotion that unites nice middle-class people in obscene hysteria. It fails to show the *sequence* of that emotion. And the real denouement of the picture, the kinds of reaction that the lynchers feel between the fire and when they appear in court—this is not there.

But *Fury* is a tremendous beginning. The end will be in a Dostoevsky, who knows the tragedy of these emotions. Or in a Fascism, which merely likes to feel them.

—Alistair Cooke, *The Listener*

DANCING PIRATE. (Lloyd Corrigan—Pioneer Pictures.)

Dancing Pirate's colour is still bright and raw but far better suited to songs and dances than the less showmanly shades of nature. Colour-Director Robert Edmond Jones has made a flat sunlight like sauterne and romantic blue moonlight in which the company in blue costumes does the "When You're Dancing the Waltz" number.

—*Time*

First dud for Technicolor. Romantic buffoonery with Charles Collins, a pretty Fred Astaire. Doesn't quite catch the gaily silly tone it attempts.

—Meyer Levin, *Esquire*

THE MOON'S OUR HOME. (William A. Seiter—Universal.)

Our hopes are raised by the thought that this picture may prove to be another *Blonde Bombshell*, Hollywood's one great laugh at itself. With just a little more cynicism and a little more spite the director, Mr. William A. Seiter, might have made this into a stirring comedy. But so far from being satire, the film is really no more than a good time being had by all, and we may go home serenely content in the knowledge that film stars are in every way as charming in their private lives as we have always been led to believe.

—*The Times*

The Moon's Our Home has a gaiety which distinguishes it from the majority of films which are called comedies. Though the picture would have gained from being directed by a Capra or a Lubitsch, it has the advantage of dialogue by Dorothy Parker, and the personalities of the players invest the familiar material with a freshness which it is always a pleasure to find that Hollywood can retrieve.

—*The Manchester Guardian*

ONE RAINY AFTERNOON. (Rowland V. Lee—Pickford-Lasky.)

I am most anxious that *One Rainy Afternoon* should on no account be missed. The film deals (let me put it briefly, so that I may rhapsodise at some length) with the dire and dreadful consequences that befell a nice young man when he

kissed the daughter of a newspaper-magnate in a darkened cinema by mistake. The scene is set in Paris, and the picture bubbles with true Parisian gaiety. It has the authentic Clair touch, it winks and sparkles with a vintage roguery that beggars description. Taste it and see.

—Paul Dehn, *The Sunday Referee*

The situation, in the hands of a Lubitsch, seems to suggest comic possibilities; it might even have passed for wit in the holiday season. But Rowland V. Lee has punched his actors into overpointing every line and overdoing every gesture, and the result is just about as light as a jam roly-poly.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

SECRET INTERLUDE. (Roy Del Ruth—20th Century-Fox.)

There may be a touch of Eugene O'Neill in the title, but there's much more good old Ethel M. Dell in the picture. The love scenes are quite beautifully done. These idyllic interludes are expertly woven into the fabric of unfriendly circumstance, so that your heart is wrung for the young couple. The result is a triumph of frank sentimentalism, and—deny it as you will—we are all sentimental at heart.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

Seldom in these days does one see quite so innocent a use of the old-fashioned hocus-pocus. Hardly a trick of nickelodeon art has been omitted. Innocent, perhaps, is hardly the word, since it's clearly as cold-blooded a putting-together of the old stuff as has been tried in years. And I don't want to hear a peep from those persons of dejected wit who say such things are so bad they're funny.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

THREE LITTLE WOLVES. (Walt Disney.)

Mickey Mouse is to-day producing *Silly Symphonies* at such speed that only the film-addict could keep up with them, and I am many behind; but I have seen the *Three Little Wolves* and can pronounce it only moderate. In the *Three Little Pigs* there was a certain comparatively steady movement; by means of a united front these very pink porkers progressed to victory. But in the new film, in which the same three are threatened by one big bad wolf and three small ones, there is so much rapidity, so much confusion, that the pigs inside the wolves' kitchen—in fact actually in the stew-pan over the fire—would have been dead long before their rescue. Walt Disney would lose nothing by slowing down a bit. —E. V. L., *Punch*

BROKEN BLOSSOMS. (Hans Brahm—Twickenham.)

By the extraordinary depth of her emotional intensity in this performance Miss Haas takes her place at once among the screen's greatest artistes. —*Birmingham Mail*

Honestly I had a hard job to be interested in the Chinese and the Child in *Broken Blossoms*. I have the greatest admiration for the ability of this charming artist (Miss Haas) and for the determination with which she puts on the accent, but her native accent comes through still, and never for a moment was I convinced that she belonged to dockland.

—A. Jympson Harman, *The Evening News*

The choice of Fraulein Haas for the part of Lucy could not have been bettered, even if Gish or Bergner had been available. Her Cockney was charming and not at all far-fetched; her acting restrained, simple, and highly sensitive—a lovely performance.

—*The New Statesman and Nation*

SAN FRANCISCO. (W. S. Van Dyke—M.G.M.)

Out of the gusty, brawling, catastrophic history of the Barbary Coast early in the century, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has fashioned a prodigally generous and completely satisfying photoplay. Primarily, of course, this is the tale of a city, a vigorous story told in splashing melodramatic phrases and with the rich vocabulary of a thoroughly expert cast and one of the shrewdest directors in Hollywood. But one cannot reduce Mr. Gable, Miss MacDonald, Spencer Tracy, Jack Holt and the others in the cast to mere abstractions. *San Francisco* tells their story, too, and with a wealth of dramatic detail. Mr. Tracy, late of *Fury*, is heading surely toward an award for the finest performances of the year.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

Both the Barbary Coast and the Earthquake are obviously rich with screen material; and in M.G.M.'s big new thriller they have been combined with the proper results. The quake is all that you could want, and it makes a fine show. Aside from the antics in Frisco's dives and the whole affair of the earthquake, the film is well supplied with music, all of which I thought Miss MacDonald did very agreeably. Altogether, the picture is a thorough and strenuous show, of a fine, substantial class.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

MODERN TIMES. (Chaplin.)

Its innate fault, that of clumsy and uncertain continuity, is due I think to Mr. Chaplin's courageous departure from pathos. For he knows no better continuity than the moments of fantasy generated by pathetic incidents. And here there are none. But untamed behind all the lavish scoring are a few vagrant Chaplin tunes, and untailored through all the over-dressed production is the pantomimist himself, energetically nose-thumbing his own incongruous prosperity, sharpening the old marvellous gestures with a new Latin flipness, his mercurial body scribbling through the piece like a caricaturist's pencil through an album of photographs.

—Alistair Cooke, *Sight and Sound*

The chief waste of time is to gas about what is good and what is bad in Charlie's film: how it's got no plot and no story, the incidents and even gags repeat themselves, the end doesn't solve anything, the pathos flat, the heroine hard, technique deliberately out of the Ark—in a thousand ways we can prove to ourselves it's the worst film Charlie has ever made. What's the use, when it still remains so much more enchanting than the films that anyone else makes? Charlie's films are *sui generis;* we can carp at them if we like, it still remains we'd rather see them than anybody else's we can think back and remember since we saw the last.

Why? It's not just manner, the timing of his gags, the rhythmic what not with which he, as no one else can, dives into an inch of water, it's matter inseparable from these. What is his matter? I remember an Amtorg official who once set himself this question. He craved an interview with Charlie. "I will determine Chaplin's orientation to the revolution once and for all," he announced firmly. We arranged it. The little man was on the set and in his make-up. Fixing his visitor in an armchair, he turned on him for some minutes the batteries of his charm. The visitor was hypnotised. After a more than ordinary abject reply from the guest, Charlie enquired mischievously: "But I am surprised to hear you say that. Aren't you then a Communist?" "Not exactly," replied the official. "What then?" "Well—you might call me a Soviet Conservative." It was not Charlie's relationto the revolution that had been established. —Ivor Montagu, *W.F.N.*

"Broken Blossoms"

DESIRE. (Frank Borzage—Paramount.)

If ever there is a museum for films this one should have a place in it as a well-nigh perfect model of its type. Construction is excellent—the opening sequences outline something new in jewel-theft technique, and new characters and new situations keep cropping up to hold the interest. —*The Sydney Bulletin*

In *Desire* Frank Borzage's direction has been trimmed and polished by a Lubitsch in his best form since *Trouble in Paradise*. That is a strong sentence, and it was meant to be. After the tribe of knockabouts, gagmen, wisecrackers, the purveyors of "smart" comedy, Mr. Lubitsch's picture is like—I almost said—a breath of spring. For to the strong light, the trees and the mountains of southern California (here called Spain, so that the audience may admire aloud with fewer misgivings) is added a sure, beautifully written piece about the usual Lubitsch trifles, about crooks and fake countesses breathless before the dawn of romance.

—Alistair Cooke, *Sight and Sound*

"Desire"

TUDOR ROSE. (Robert Stevenson — Gainsborough.)

This is one of the best half-dozen films ever made in this country. Two years ago Robert Stevenson wrote a screen play on the tragic life of Lady Jane Grey and the intrigues which surrounded her after the death of Henry VIII. The story is told with simplicity, restraint, dignity, and power. The acting—notably good from Hardwicke and Miss Pilbeam—maintains a remarkable standard down to the smallest part. But the real star is Robert Stevenson, who has turned out a beautiful, moving, and—highest praise of all—a completely intelligent picture.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

Exact or not, this is a picture in a hundred, human, moving, and performed with skill. It is set out extremely simply, and played extremely quietly; no one has the bad taste to exaggerate his portrait, and at least three of the players, the children, Nova Pilbeam and Desmond Tester, and Leslie Perrins, have sunk themselves so completely in the mood of their parts that they glow with a kind of golden renaissance glory.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

"Tudor Rose"

WHERE THERE'S A WILL. (William Beaudine —Gainsborough.)

In the past many British film comedies have suffered from slowness of action and dullness of dialogue, but here the introduction of the American director, William Beaudine, has resulted in something approaching the best standards of Hollywood. *Where There's a Will* presents Will Hay in a giddy adventure concerning American bank thieves in London. The action is swift and sure and uproarious. The star is at his best, and is joyously supported by an excellent cast. This film will be a tremendous popular success.

—Seton Margrave, *The Daily Mail*

Where There's a Will, its venerable gags and its absurdities on one side, is vastly entertaining. Pleasant, friendly, low-brow people will chuckle all the way through it, and I can guarantee a few genuine explosions of mirth.

—Gale Pedrick, *The Star*

FORGOTTEN WOMEN. (William Beaudine — Wardour Films.)

Nine women in a dug-out. Nine hysterical, coarse-mouthed, ranting, garrulous women, arguing, sneering, shrieking, and screaming, nagging each other interminably until the incessant din of their raucous voices becomes almost unbearable, and even the short interludes of bombing, gunfire, and aerial attack come as a welcome relief from that ceaseless babble. Not for a long time has Hollywood produced so inglorious a picture of lust and blood and war.

—*The Times*

Here is an all-woman cast in a war drama. The story is set round a canteen close to the lines, and is sincerely told.

—Maurice Cowan, *The Daily Herald*

"Poppy"

POPPY. (A. Edward Sutherland—Paramount.)

On this auspicious occasion, and the opening of any W. C. Fields picture can be no less, it is our solemn obligation to report that the forces of nature and of circumstance continue to be arrayed solidly against our hero. But Mr. Fields triumphs—as Mr. Fields always triumphs—and it is a glorious victory, for him and for comedy.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

That Mr. Fields has possibly not yet learned the lines might be suggested by this new and slightly blurred affair, which isn't, in my opinion, one of the best of the pictures he has made throughout the last eleven years. That it doesn't in the least matter whether he knows his lines or not is perfectly true. At least one can feel pretty sure that he has given us one of the pleasantest, most charming little comedies we shall get this summer.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

He is really independent of either physical comedy or wisecrack, though he uses both when they suit. With Fields, as with only the few great clowns, the man himself is the fun.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

ON ICE. (Disney.)

On Ice is a new Mickey Mouse cartoon in colour, in which Walt Disney's comic inventiveness is matched by his skilful control of colour. In all but the sound accompaniment, this is the equal of *The Band Concert*.

—Forsyth Hardy, *The Scotsman*

LETZTE ROSE. (Karl Anton—Tobis.)

Here is a German's idea of seventeenth-century England—an England filled with Elizabethan houses that look (oddly) far older than they do to-day; with country lads and lasses dressed in what suspiciously resembles the native costume of Austro-Hungary; with reapers who reap in time to music, with drinkers who drink in time to music, and with singers who very nearly succeed in singing in time to music.

—Paul Dehn, *The Sunday Referee*

One cannot complain of the absurd English settings of *Letzte Rose;* they are not more false than the Vienna of innumerable English pictures, but the tra-la-la melodies, the hearty Teutonic merrymaking, and the determined prettiness of the photography are tedious, not the less tedious for being German. The Continental racket has become rather tiresome, and the films at Studio One have not been noticeably above the Hollywood level. —Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

WHITE ANGEL. (William Dieterle—Warner.)

Formally suggested by Lytton Strachey's essay, but in no way resembling the Strachey analysis, the piece shows us Miss Francis in the role of Florence Nightingale. There are no flagrant old-fashioned movie distortions of historical facts here, aside from the general atmosphere and performance, which are unfailingly picturesque. Miss Francis, even in the severe garb of a nurse in the Crimea, is the ceremonial brunette that she always is, much more the "Lady with a Lamp" than the Strachey character. The picture is a little school-bookish, perfectly respectable, and, I should say, quite on the dull side. —John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

W.F.N. SELECTION

The Story of Louis Pasteur	***
Fury	**
Modern Times	**
Poppy	*

FILMS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE

Fury
Desire
Tudor Rose
Dancing Pirate
San Francisco
The Story of Louis Pasteur
The White Angel
Broken Blossoms
The Moon's our Home
One Rainy Afternoon
Secret Interlude
Three Little Wolves
Poppy
Where There's a Will
Forgotten Women
Letzte Rose
On Ice
Modern Times

"Letzte Rose"

New questionnaire asks opinions on colour, stars, stories

BY EWART HODGSON

WITH THE COMING issue of Sidney Bernstein's fifth Questionnaire the 350,000 weekly patrons of the cinemas with which he is associated will once again enjoy the privilege of saying just what they think about films, film stars, and a dozen other aspects of cinema entertainment in general.

Infinite care has been taken in the drawing up of questions calculated to discover the exact likes and dislikes of picturegoers.

In the fourth Questionnaire issued in 1934, thirteen questions were asked ranging from :

Who are your favourite film stars? . . .
Which film stars do you dislike most?

to:

How often do you go to the pictures? . . .
What part of a cinema do you usually sit in?

Experience of Questionnaires extending over nine years has taught Bernstein that basic questions such as the first two can always usefully be repeated, but in the 1936 form certain new questions, prompted by current cinema developments, will have to be asked.

For instance, a new question on the subject of coloured talkies is to be included. It will probably take the form of:

Have you see any coloured talkies?
Do you like them?
Would you rather they had been photographed in black and white in the ordinary way?

It is impossible to prophesy the results that will accrue from this question. The film industry, as a whole, continues to flirt with colour rather than marry it, feeling maybe that cinemagoers are too conservative as yet to accept anything but black and white photography.

A recent development which, it is felt, calls for a question, is the current tendency for Hollywood to produce feature pictures running more than two hours, thus making it impractical for the ordinary double feature programme to be sustained.

Certain close students of the cinema see in this development a move by Hollywood to lead exhibitors back to single feature programmes.

But does the average cinemagoer want his feature pictures to run longer than an hour and a half? That is a question which the Bernstein Questionnaire will endeavour to solve.

In the 1934 Questionnaire patrons took delight in listing the stars they dislike most. Such was the significance of the results derived from this question that it was made obvious to Sidney Bernstein that the word "dislike" did not adequately express the attitude of the public towards certain stars.

Experience at the box office has definitely proved that aside from unpopular stars there are stars who definitely keep people away from the cinema. Hence the decision to include in the 1936 Questionnaire a subsidiary question to follow: "Which film stars do you dislike most?"

This question will take the form of:

Do you actually stay away from the cinema if a film is showing with any of the stars you dislike? If so, put an X against the name or names about whom you feel so strongly.

In this connection it is doubtless true that many exhibitors are unaware of the anti-box-office influence wielded by stars whose personalities evoke such dislike. Certainly the studios are ignorant of the true state of affairs since they continue to impose these stars' pictures on exhibitors and public.

When preparation was being made for the issue of the 1936 Questionnaire various public bodies were invited to advance their views and suggestions. It is significant that the Office of Special Enquiries and Reports of the Board of Education were prompt to seize the opportunity thus offered.

"We would be interested," they say in a letter to Bernstein theatres, "to see the results which you would get from the following questions":

(1) Do you take your children to "A" films?

(2) Do you find that your children are picking up an American accent or vocabulary?

(3) Do you object to advertisement films?

(4) Would you like to see in your theatre the best of continental films, in the language of the country but with explanatory subtitles in English?

(5) Number the following types of short films in the order of your preference: Travel, Industry, Science, Animal Life, Trade, Sport.

These suggestions from Whitehall have been the subject of careful consideration and so far as it is practical they will be included in the Questionnaire.

Also, the National Institute of Industrial Psychology has evinced an interest in the form to be taken by the Questionnaire. Some of the questions which they suggest are:

Do you read reviews of films in newspapers or magazines? If so, in what newspapers or magazines?

Do you agree with the opinions of the writer?

Are there any groups of films which you like so much that you never miss a chance of going to see one? e.g. those with a particular star, by a particular director, or about a particular subject.

Are there any groups of films which you dislike so much that you always avoid going to see them?

Here again these suggestions will have an important bearing on this year's Bernstein Questionnaire.

Little man—what now?

When *Modern Times* came out I went to see it, full of faith despite *City Lights*, to see Chaplin come back. I laughed a lot but after the show I was dubious. Two weeks ago I saw *Modern Times* again. The Marble Arch Pavilion was only a quarter full and I did not get a heavy laugh out of the whole picture. The film is moderately funny but something is missing. Chaplin has changed, not in his acting but in his outlook.

Before *City Lights* and *Modern Times* he was everybody's little man, typifying man throughout time. Small, up against trouble, sentimental and usually coming out on top. In *Modern Times* he no longer typifies, he criticises. Why has he changed? Was it his critics and admirers writing and speaking on his faculty for social comment? For something has influenced him to take himself seriously as a social critic. *Modern Times* is the result. Instead of our little man we have a man with a mission. All would have been well if his attempts at social criticism had come off. But his sociology is weak and one-sided and it has killed the old spontaneous slapstick from which Chaplin's real virtues came. Without slapstick a Chaplin film is dead; it moves slowly if at all.

There are two minor points of criticism; one is Paulette Goddard and the other a lack of continuity. We know Chaplin is close to his leading lady, but why must be express his private troubles in his social work? Miss Goddard's part in the film seems to be the result of an old man sentimentalising his own petty troubles. Miss Goddard herself is moderately good but her role is unfortunate. The film took two and a half years to make and it has a trouble common to long-distance films. Every sequence is so highly polished in itself that it has only a scenario connection with the others.

Expectations for a future Chaplin-acted film seem bleak. He says he is going over to directing.

Schmeling did it. Why not Chaplin?

JOHN TAYLOR

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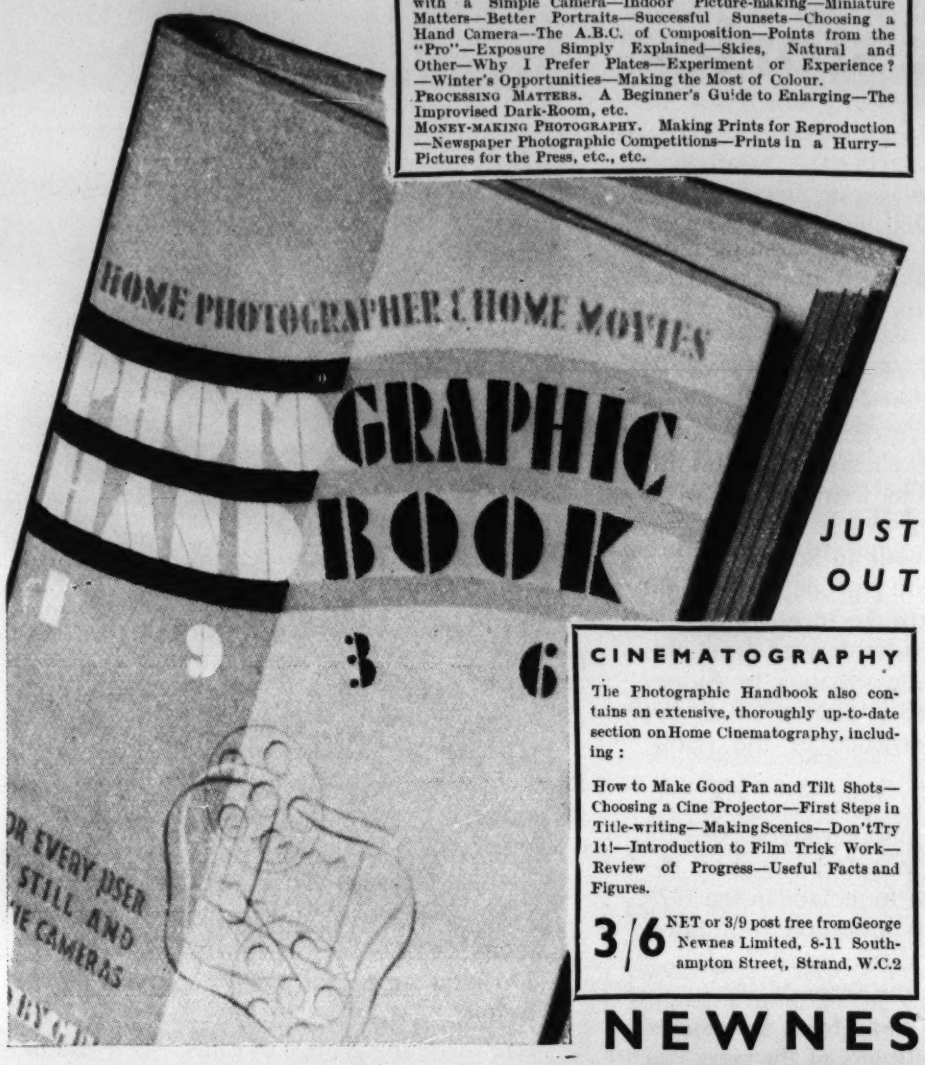

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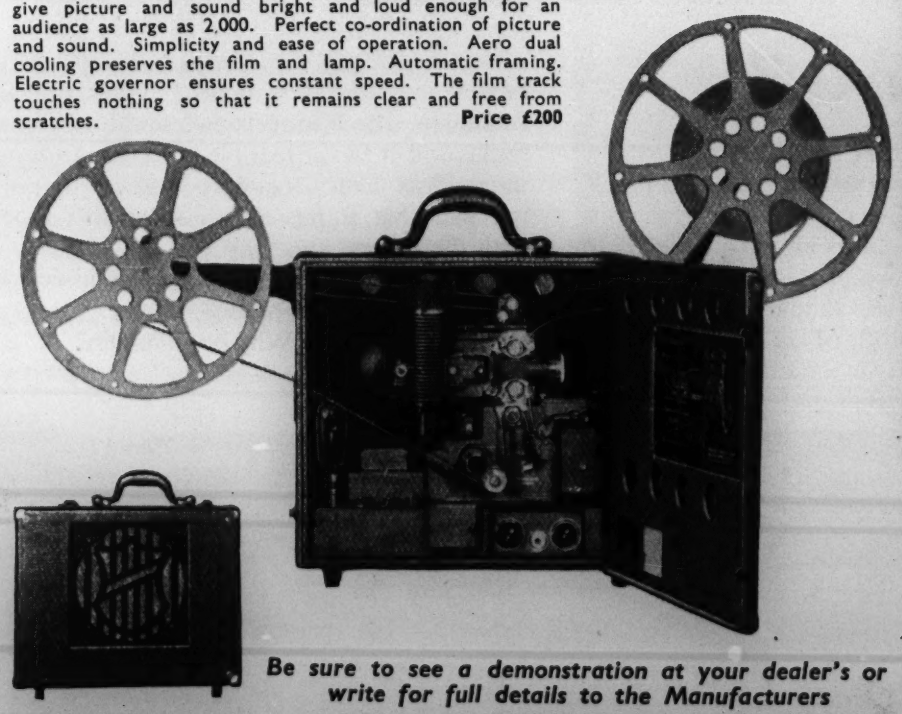

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PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS ★

Audiences and Film workers organise on Political lines in France

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT

The changed political situation in France is having enormous influence on the cultural activities of all branches of art. New forces are growing up in the petrified fields of French art tradition.

In the theatre the L'U.T.I.F. (L'Union des Théatres Independants de France, the former Fédération du Théatre Ouvrier de France) came into existence two months ago. It is led by men like Jouvet, Dullin, the foremost representatives of the French theatre. On July 14th it will make its début with a spectacular mass pageant celebrating the French Revolution, on the very locality where the ancestors of to-day's generation fought it out.

As far as music is concerned, the *Fédération Musicale Populaire* was formed and people of the fame of Darius Milhaud, Jaques Ibert, Charles Koechlin have devoted their work to writing music for simple orchestras, mostly brass and unison voices. There seems to be a new demand for music since the *Front populaire* came to life, and it will not be at all surprising if this new vigorous movement of the French people gives to the world more songs like the *Marseillaise* and the *Internationale*.

The Art-Federation has organised a Courbet-Exhibition. There is activity in every branch; but the most interesting progress seems to be going on in motion pictures.

The pictures turned out by the French industry, as an average, are not too good. Besides, there is a censorship, which kills any attempt to break the traditions of the existing standard in production. But the French people do want better pictures, *their* pictures. As a result of this popular demand *CINE-LIBERTE* was formed, a large organisation which boasts of a long list of well-known collaborators and the head of which at present is Jean Renoir.

At first, *Ciné-Liberté*—formed last November—was intended to be an association of left technical engineers. The word *technician* is used by *Ciné-Liberté* on purpose, instead of the vague name *cinéaste*. This organisation wants to distinguish definitely between the real workers of films and the mere producer or distributor. *Ciné-Liberté* has been created to produce a *direct and immediate connection between all filmworkers and film production* without the interference of avaricious intermediates and middle-men.

Difficulties with censorship arose after the production of Jean Renoir's communist film *Le Vie est à Nous*. *Ciné-Liberté* was aware of the importance of having a spectator's section. Many comrades had already been eager to join an institution fighting for better films and against censorship.

Sections were immediately formed. Already, after a few months' work, *Ciné-Liberté* has about 10,000 members all over France. In the 6th, 7th, 15th, 18th and 20th *arrondissements* these spectators' sections are already in existence; they are being formed in the 11th, 12th and 19th, etc. And, of course, suburbs have their own sections as well as other towns—for instance, Reims or Nice, in the provinces. It is the first task of *four main sections* to procure good films and especially films banned by censorship. The members or visitors of a cinema-club meet for these films in some cinema, as *Ciné-Liberté* has no halls of its own. The cost of a whole programme for a single showing is about 600 francs. Films available include *Potemkin*, *Borinage*, *Last Days of St. Petersburg*, *Soap Bubbles*, *Three Songs of Lenin*, *War is Hell*, *Beggars Opera*, *La Maternelle*, *Thunder over Mexico*, *Jazz Comedy*, *New Gulliver*, newsreels, educationals and some early Chaplins.

Many of these films are censored in France, but can be shown to members of *Ciné-Liberté* branches. (Membership costs 5 francs 50 centimes a year.)

Even so, the authorities overruled *Ciné-Liberté's* protests and refused to allow any showings whatever of Piscator's *Revolt of the Fishermen*.

The third section is the technical one. There are sub-divisions for cutters, operators, etc. This section's members meet every Thursday evening for discussion. They are employed in the fourth section, the section of production (and distribution). Here, a "coopérative" has been formed.

Cinéma-Liberté has already produced a number of smaller films, mostly documentary; a film of the May-day demonstrations (300 feet), and another one of the 11th November. A longer film is *La mure des fédérés* (900 feet). A film showing the commemoration of the "commune" of 1871 was prepared in two days. This fact indicates how quickly the technical section of *C.L.* works! These films are all silent.

During the strikes, a strike film was produced; a live "reportage" of about 3000 feet.

These films are not expensive; the smaller silents cost 3,000 frs. *Buffalo*, Ciné-Liberté's first talkie, cost about 12,000 frs. And Renoir's big film did not cost more than 300,000 frs. This in France, where an average film costs more than a million francs, and very often 1½ millions.

Renoir's last picture, *La Vie est à nous*, a film made for the Communist Party in France, is the first product of the new movement, a picture which is widely acclaimed and which proves the correctness of the basis of *Ciné-Liberté*, which combines the work of professionals and amateurs, which uses stock-shots and specially directed scenes just as required and achieves a really impressive result in Renoir's hands.

I have seen crowds cheering the picture, and after the show, almost without exception, joining *Ciné-Liberté* as members.

The general committee of *Ciné-Liberté* is formed by Moussinac, Claude Aveline, Modot, Lefevre (three actors), Feyder, Gréville, Painlevé, Dulac, Jean Richard Bloch, Jeanson and others. Jean Renoir is general secretary.

Ophüls Directs in Holland

W.F.N.'s Dutch Correspondent

MAX OPHULS, director of *Liebelei* and *La Signora di Tutti*, is making in Holland a new film, *Comedy for Gold*, from the scenario by Walter Schlee. After its completion it is rumoured that he will come to England to direct Annabella in a new picture.

Ophüls is a strong individualist. He refuses to be embroiled in studio mass production. He also feels that the present necessity in films for catering to the man-in-the-street is merely a childish ailment of a growing industry—to be compared with the technical difficulties of colour and stereoscopy.

Another of Ophüls' theories is that the present influence of literature on film will give way to an influence of film on literature. As a basis for this theory he cites a number of modern French novels which have followed to some extent film technique. He is convinced, too, that the recent improvement in American production is due to the *avant-garde* movement in Europe.

Speaking of his recent trip to Russia, Ophüls states that at the present moment the Russian film is technically and artistically below the average of European and American productions, and he believes that this is largely due to the Government's insistence on "tendency." This, he says, is the only reason why Russian production is not a threat to America.

In 1938 Russia plans to produce 800 pictures, some of which will be made at the new studio in the Crimea. Some of these, he suggested, will be produced especially for the European and American market, so that 1938 may prove to be a decisive year in the international status of the Soviet film.

Ophüls is to direct at least one of the new films.

Cedric Belfrage, who is now in Moscow, will write about Russia's "Gollywood" in W.F.N.'s September issue.

Freedom for French Newsreels

Greater freedom for newsreels is guaranteed by amendments to the French censorship decrees.

Hitherto newsreels, whether domestic or foreign, circulating in France, had to receive official approval. The new regulations exempt the reels from this obligation, subject to certain formalities being complied with, although in exceptional cases the producers may be required to submit editions to the police before releasing for public exhibition.

The new decrees also exempt from censorship documentary films, and animated cartoons made for a State department, educational films and commercial publicity films not exceeding a running time of three minutes.

Reasons for change of style in Russian films

BY F. D. KLINGENDER

News about present film trends in Russia published in H. V. Meyerowitz's article on Russian films for our July number has aroused a great deal of interest and argument. The following article argues that the change in style of Russian films must be associated with the passing of a period of intense struggle and the development of the Soviet State.

THOSE OF US who have not, like Mr. Meyerowitz, had the advantage of seeing the most recent Russian film productions on the spot, are at a great disadvantage in discussing the critical points he has raised. Nevertheless, the tendencies he so heartily deplores have been sufficiently clear in some of the pictures last seen in this country (*Jazz Comedy*, *St. Petersburg Nights*, *Storm*, *Lieutenant Kije*) to provide a basis for such a discussion.

There can be little disagreement concerning the basic facts, first that the style represented by the great silent films of the 1920's (and in a belated instance to a certain extent still by Pudovkin's *Deserter*) has passed and, secondly, that the quality of the new production has (again with some highly important exceptions such as Chapaieff) been disappointing to Western film enthusiasts. What has not, however, been examined, either by Mr. Meyerowitz, or by most other writers on the subject, is *why* there has necessarily been this change in style and what are the conditions of life and outlook in Russia at the present time which make the achievement of a new style imperative. Like every other sphere of art and culture, intimately related to the outlook of the Russian people, their films can only be fully interpreted in terms of the vast changes in the conditions of existence that have characterised the development of the Soviet state since the Revolution, and not in terms of any abstract aesthetic standard. The Soviet films that have achieved world fame were without exception reflections in art of an outlook characteristic for a period of intense struggle. A period of struggle against political foes both external and internal and for the establishment, in the shortest possible time, of the material and technical basis for the new Soviet society.

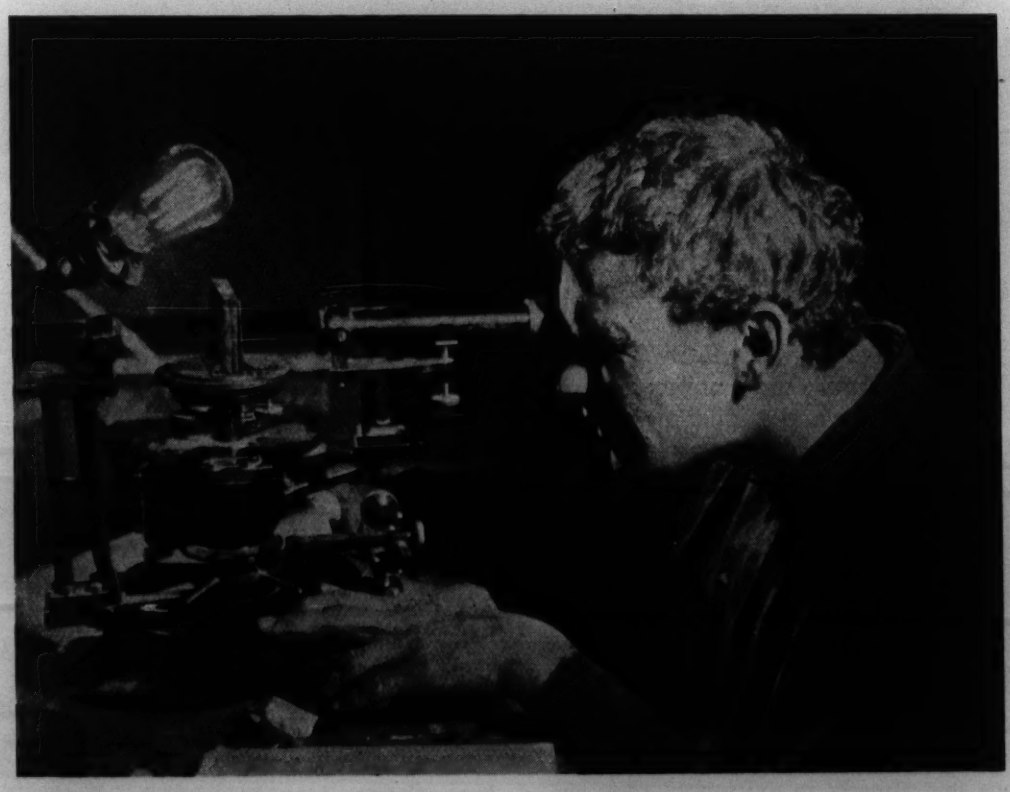
The films of the NEP and early Five-year Plan Periods were therefore in the first place great epics of the actual Revolution and, secondly, inspiring documents of a stubborn struggle with nature and for the mastery of a new technique. Heroism, sacrifice, effort, hard and exacting in spite of the ultimate triumph, were the dominant notes. This basic mood found a ready echo in a capitalist world but recently emerged from the post-war crisis and the struggle culminating in the English general strike of 1926 and advancing towards the new upheavals of the 1930's. At the same time the formal break with the past that attained its highest achievement in these films presented an inspiring (though by no means entirely parallel) example to the western artists.

Towards the end of this period, however, a new note appeared that already foreshadowed the change that was to come. As the victorious issue, first of the political and (with the progress of the first Five-Year Plan) also of the economic struggle, became more and more certain, interest began increasingly to be concentrated, not on the problems of form and technique, but on that of creating a new type of man. The problem of the new human relations and of the changing outlook of the Soviet workers both collectively and individually became the central theme. Already approached in *The Road to Life*, this new emphasis achieved its first culmination in the series of films dealing with the human aspects of industrial instruction (*Counter-plan*, *Men and Jobs*, etc.). Macharet's *Men and Jobs*, still fresh in the memory of British audiences, illustrates this trend to perfection. At the same time it will enable us to understand the new problems facing the Russian artists in the film as in any other sphere to-day.

The heroes of this film are the members of a shock brigade of Russian workers employed in the construction of the Dnieperstroy Dam. The change in their whole outlook as they learned to master the new industrial technique in competition with a brigade led by an American engineer is its central theme. Ragged and primitive before their achievement, they attain a new pride in their skill and a new respect even for their outward appearance, once they have mastered their tasks. It is difficult to forget the feeling of elation and joy inspired by the final shot of this film. Looking down on the gigantic dam from his window high above the river the American engineer sees the new mechanic, formerly a simple stoker, standing beside his heavy crane. The crane, formerly ill-cared for and screeching at every movement of a lever, is spotlessly clean. The mechanic himself is decked out in a brand-new suit and wears a brightly chequered cap. He flicks a speck of dust with a rag from the machine. He spits. But he soils his shoe in doing so. He quickly removes this blemish before anyone has seen it and returns to his former position with a gesture full of pride and elation.

The Russian workers who are conducting the Second Five-Year Plan to it ssuccessful conclusion have conquered the enemies that formerly threatened the existence of their new society. In a period of unparalleled strain they have mastered the difficult technique of the most highly developed modern industry and have firmly established the material basis for their new life. They are now eager to enjoy the first fruits of their past efforts. For the first time in history the goods of this world are available for them. Cultural snobs may smile at the so obviously new suit and the chequered cap of our happy mechanic. They overlook the fact that it is the first time that he can have a decent suit, that he can relax from his past struggle and is eager for the joys and comforts of life. Surely the fact that by his own efforts he has conquered the goods of this world for himself is of far greater importance than his as yet somewhat primitive and untrained standards of taste.

It is this new situation, this unexampled demand of a whole nation for joy and beauty that determines the tasks of the Russian artist to-day. All emancipation leads back to the essentially human, said Marx. For the first time, the problems of human relationships appear in their pure form without the distorting elements of class relationships, contrasts of wealth and poverty and antiquated taboos. Never as yet have these problems found expression in art. Once that expression will have been found it will be an achievement even greater than that of the epic heroisms of the civil war and constructive period.



"Moscow" (Kultkino, 1925)

Replies to "U.S.S.R. Goes Hollywood"

From a sheaf of correspondence that arrived in reply to H. V. Meyerowitz's article we have selected the two representative letters below.

SIR,—Please permit me to congratulate you for having published Mr. Meyerowitz's very timely article on Soviet cinema. I feel that there are many readers of your valuable paper who think that it was high time that a description of the recent unfortunate trends in Soviet cinema were made public. Mr. Meyerowitz, whose descriptions are borne out by numbers of discriminating film critics (including many sympathetic to the Soviet political regime), unfortunately assigns no satisfactory causes to the degeneracy of the cinema in Soviet Russia.

To those of us who, like myself, are strong protagonists of Marxism and who have followed the developments in Soviet literature and drama as well, it is apparent that the reactionary character of Soviet cinema is no isolated phenomenon. The same vulgarisations as those described by Mr. Meyerowitz are to-day to be seen in all cultural forms practised in the U.S.S.R. Why is this?

Marxists believe that not only the direction but also the technique of cultural forms are determined (as in the case of all social phenomena) by the productive relations of that society in which they exist. The reasons for a *general* trend in a particular direction can always be explained by an investigation of the economic basis of the society in question. The shift towards Hollywood on the part of Soviet cinema is due to the general line of the Soviet bureaucracy which to-day is all for "respectability." To discerning political observers the Stalin-Howard interview came as no surprise. The adherence by the Russian Communist Party to the official theory of "Socialism in one country" has impelled it to seek the assistance not of the workers in other countries but of their capitalist governments. Concessions to international capitalism have had their effect on the internal policy of the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Film Conference held in Moscow last year emphasised the importance of dealing with the individual in future Russian pictures. Shumiatski's visit to America is not the reason for the abandonment of the old type of mass film as Mr. Meyerowitz suggests. His visit appears rather to be the visit of an investigator into the slickest methods of incorporating the new "individualisation" into Soviet films.

Culture is probably the most sensitive barometer of changes in political and economic foundations of a society. The tendency in Soviet Russia to-day towards western cultural standards, is merely a reflection of the general tendency of the Russian bureaucracy away from revolutionary Marxism. Whether this process will continue and degeneration set in, depends upon many factors. Not the least important of these is the realisation by workers and intellectuals in all countries of the absolute bankruptcy of the Stalinist organisations and the determination on their part to assist in the building of a new revolutionary Marxist International.—Yours,

DAVID SCHRIRE.

SIR,—If I went to Paris, Berlin or Tokyo to see new films, my first concern would be to get some understanding of prevailing social conditions in the country concerned in order better to judge and appreciate the general content and quality of its films.

Mr. Meyerowitz goes to Moscow, talks to a number of directors, sees four films and pessimistically concludes that all is lost and that Soviet films are aping Hollywood.

Mr. Meyerowitz does us a bad service in that he makes no attempt to relate the present stage of Russian film development to the social and economic background of the country. This omission is all the more remarkable, because more than in any other country films in Russia reflect social conditions—the approach to the realities of life is a fundamental principle of Soviet Cinema.

Russia is undergoing a transition which it is difficult for many people to realise. She has emerged from the years of Civil War and the years of the first Five-Year Plan to a stage where real prosperity for all her citizens is steadily being achieved. She has overcome food shortage, rationing has been abolished, wages are rising, the collective farmers are buying more goods than ever before and the road is clear to the next step —the completely classless society.

Russia's films are a mirror of her progress. The early films reflected the achievements and victories of the Civil war—*End of St. Petersburg*, *October*. After the Civil War came the period of economic reconstruction—and films such as *Turksib*, *General Line*. There were problems of social reconstruction and we had *The Road to Life*, problems of industrial organisation—and *Men and Jobs*.

Throughout the whole period of the Soviet Cinema, her directors and technicians have had the task of re-orientating their work to the new tasks of the society in which they live. Surely no one is going to argue that this is a bad thing for the artist? If the artist is incapable of understanding and reflecting the life around him, then he is a poor artist. It is not a question of "imposing theories" on artists. The artists themselves have the responsibility of understanding the significance of what is happening.

To-day the cinema is faced with new tasks, a fresh orientation is required. The Russian people having won their battles over intervention, economic chaos, illiteracy, and poverty, are enjoying life in the real meaning of the term. They have leisure, money, plenty of goods and a growing supply of "luxuries." In their new Constitution they have won the "Victors' Prize." Film must reflect this new spirit, this "joy of life." The people can afford to ease up a bit and naturally they want a broader sense of "entertainment" in their films. Alexandroff's *Jazz Comedy*, crude as it was, was a manifestation of this new spirit. It was gay and inconsequential, *but it could have been made at no other time*. Of *Circus*, Mr. Meyerowitz says despairingly, "I am certain it will be a success and that the theme song will be sung by everybody in Moscow." How terrible! And are we to understand that the revolution is betrayed because the Moscow proletariat whistle theme songs? And if *Circus* is a success with the Russian people, who are we to grumble? No one will deny that the Russians have a higher critical standard towards art than the English, and maybe their opinion of a film is more important than Mr. Meyerowitz's.

So for Pete's sake don't let us throw up our arms in despair because Alexandroff discovers crooning, and Vinievski indulges in a spot of slap-stick comedy.

If the Russian workers want to sing, listen to dance bands, wear check caps and make whoopee once in a while, that's just fine, and if the critics can't appreciate the reason for it—well, that's just too bad.—Yours,

RAYMOND EAST.

Polish Government Aids Producers

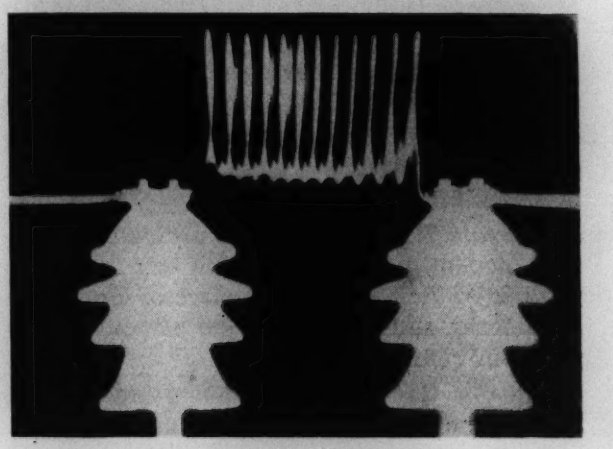
(*From W.F.N.'s Warsaw Correspondent*)

There are only two studios in Poland, and the technical equipment is limited. Nevertheless the output of shorts is 200 a year and indicates the tendency to make location documentaries to avoid studio problems.

The Government is encouraging this movement by subsidies to the various cultural societies concerned with production, and by a 20 per cent tax reduction to cinemas showing films approved by the Censors as artistic or educational.

Private concerns are also entering the field both in straight advertising and indirect propaganda.

Three Polish films, made with Government help and finance, were privately shown recently.



"Safety-First in Electricity"

They are straightforward propaganda for Safety-First in factories, Safety-First (Electricity), and Physical Culture.

Safety-First in Factories, directed by Cekalski, is a vivid and direct piece of work. The first half shows how carelessness leads to danger, the second shows the same work carried out under Safety-First principles.

The electrical film uses abstract effects to show the danger of meddling with live wires, exposed plugs, etc.

Finally, the Physical Culture film, brilliantly photographed by Wohl, emphasises the advantages of sport and outdoor life. It depends chiefly on its cutting, which is really remarkable, and was done by the director, Ford.

Further sponsored films are planned, including several for tourist propaganda purposes.

"Built for Eternity" (Gehr and Jungk)

Spain refuses to take films seriously

SAYS ROBERT KIEK

"COME UP and see Spain some time."

Travel-impressions: heaps of signoritas, not half as lovely as Hollywood's; bull-fights, not nearly as impressive as Cantor's.

Outdoors: dust, sun, poverty.

Notwithstanding this, 1935 produced forty original Spanish pictures—a remarkable number even considering the interest of South America in Spanish pictures.

Amsterdam Trade Show: a pile of Spanish newsreels, documentaries, and the ten best full-length pictures of the forty. A nightmare of Granadian Alhambras, still worse than the perpetual aeroplanes in Paramount newsreels!

Can one talk of a Spanish film industry? In Spain is it the same as in other small countries: a lucky beginning and a slow but certain death? Are there film societies? Is there a movement such as our late *avant-garde?* Is there hypocrisy in matters of film-as-an-art?

These questions can be answered with a decisive *no!* There is no film industry: there is a charming kind of dilettantism, which may produce now and then a more or less interesting picture. Films are being produced in Spain because some rich families want to lose their money in pictures instead of in American steel. Yet the situation in the film business is becoming sounder; this year many more films will be made than last year. The financial outlook is not too discouraging. The best companies, Atlantic, Cifesa, Filmofono, Ecea are in Madrid; Barcelona has only one important production Company: the Edici, and two independent studios which may be hired.

Despite the number of companies in Madrid, Barcelona offers many more advantages: its beautiful situation, its vicinity to the sea, its mountains and forests, and its better and sunny climate. And Barcelona is an important commercial town.

Spain lacks film societies; it needs directors, cameramen and actors who have more than stage experience. The acting in Spanish films is mostly bad and full of theatrical gestures. There is, however, one really gifted film artist in Spain: Imperio Argentina, no "pretty" star, but an actress who does not look like Bette Davis or Ginger Rogers. Imperio Argentina has a voice that may make Grace Moore jealous. *Nobleza Baturra* (Arragonian magnanimity) is her most important picture. It is the silly story of a wrongly compromised girl in an Arragonian provincial town, with all the prototypes of the good lover and the bad Don Juan. Undoubtedly this picture is the best produced to date. Its chief interest is its local colour. Imperio Argentina sings beautifully Andalusian and Gitan songs and she is a perfect dancer.

The film technicians in Spain are nearly all foreigners, principally French and German. So the German cameraman, Heinrich Gaertner—now *Henrique* Gaertner—has the field practically to himself. Sound is not good. The last scenes of *Nobleza* cannot be heard. The sound system is Spanish (Laffon-Selgas, the inventors).

The Spanish public is very fond of home-made pictures; they love—as the Italians do—songs and music, and it is cheaper to see good dancing in the cinema.

Why should one be serious about Spanish production? The Spaniards are not. There is little hope that the Spanish film industry will improve. To imagine the contrary would be to build castles in Spain.

But Imperio Argentina will find her way to Hollywood.

Belgium may build national studio

The report of the Cinema Committee appointed by the Government will be issued shortly. It is certain that this report will favour the encouragement of national production in the form of erection of a large national studio. It is not known to what extent the Government will subsidise its erection. The question is closely linked up with the programme for the provision of national work for the relief of unemployed technicians and artists.

Meanwhile, the independent directors have started on some new films.

Charles Dekeukeleire has begun shooting a big feature film *The Bad Eye* in Flanders. The script of this picture was specially written by the well-known stage writer Herman Terlinck.

Belgian films will be shown at the 1937 Paris Exhibition: films by Henri Storck, Charles Dekeukeleire and André Cauvin.

Dekeukeleire has been given the production of a film on *Belgian Folklore*, and Cauvin, formerly an amateur, will begin his first documentary, *Bonne Cherè*.

Henri Storck is now working on three new documentaries dealing with tourist propaganda.

Louis Cuny—Realist

Louis Cuny, former architect and decorator, is making real-life films in France. These are not travelogues and not educationals. Cuny does not believe in superimposing a film-story on the subject he chooses and in his opinion the function of real-life films is rather to direct the minds of the audience than to force information upon them. He writes his own commentary and dialogue because he has no love for "beautiful phrases" and he uses words sparingly.

L. Cuny has made a film about Montmartre and a laboratory film for the Board of Education and he is planning a new film to be called *La Jeunesse de France*. This will be shot in the open air and will adopt the *reportage* method. Actors will be used but no "stars."

Chenal plans Pirandello script

Future plans of Pierre Chenal, the French director, include the screen adaptation of one of Pirandello's early novels, *Il Fu Mattia Pascal*, and preparations for filming a de Vere Stacpoole novel.

Pierre Chenal believes firmly in the importance of knowing just what the camera is capable of doing and he served a seven years' apprenticeship as his own cameraman, during which time he produced a number of silent instructional films.

In 1932 he shot his first feature film, *La Rue Sans Nom*, the film that has often been compared to Pabst's *Freudlose Gasse*. Two years later he shot Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, and afterwards the Jack London story *Les Mutinées de l'Elseneur*. Both these films suffered from censorship. In the latter the French censor cut the laughter of the Chinese steward who pours vitriol on the face of one of the mutineers and one of the knock-outs of a member of the crew.

British Sponsors buy French Air

by our Paris Correspondent

The Ullswater Committee and subsequently the Government have devoted much space to the problem of sponsored broadcasting. Attempts are afoot to persuade the French government to ban advertising programmes directed at British consumers. These overtures will meet with powerful opposition both from listeners dissatisfied with the B.B.C.'s Sunday programmes and from the sponsoring interests; for the present position of French commercial radio, outlined in this article, indicates that advertisers see in broadcasting one of the most potent instruments of modern publicity.

There are twelve private transmitting stations in France, the best known of which are *Poste Parisien*, *Radio-Cité*, *Normandie*, *Midi*, *Nimes*, *Maroc* and *Algiers*. An additional station, *Radio-Fer*, provides a service to express-trains running in all parts of France. Most of these stations are owned either by finance groups, electrical concerns, or newspapers.

The operation of private transmitters is regulated by the law of March 19th, 1928. This law lays down the right of the French government to purchase any transmitter if it is dissatisfied with the nature of the material broadcast from it. It lays down that no licence shall be granted for a period of more than five years, and that all licences shall be issued to indvidual persons who shall be approved by the French Post Office.

Licences are not transferable, nor may the transmitters themselves change hands without government consent. Later legislation forbade the alteration of wave-lengths or the increase of aerial power without Post Office permission. Should increased power be allowed, a tax of 200 francs is imposed on every additional kilowatt. Further, a 10 per cent tax on all receipts from sponsored programmes is payable to the local authorities in whose districts the transmitters are situated. In case of mobilisation the government has the right of instant requisition of all transmitters.

The strict nature of this legislation, coupled with the fact that the Post Office has several times during the last six years attempted to take over commercial stations, makes it clear that the Government is gradually trying to absorb these transmitters into the State service and so gain a broadcasting monopoly.

Poste Parisien and *Radio-Normandie*, together with the powerful *Radio-Luxembourg*, which lies outside French territory, are the three commercial stations which most closely concern British listeners, since they are easily received in this country.

Poste Parisien was established in 1924 under the ownership of the newspaper "*Petit Parisien*." In 1932 the station was taken over by the Compagnie Générale d'Energie Radio-Electrique. It may, however, be assumed that the "*Petit Parisien*" still maintains a degree of control since several of the newspaper's directors, including Julien Coudy (Managing Director), have remained on the controlling board of the station.

Radio-Normandie, a recently built and splendidly equipped station, is at present owned by the Société Anonyme des Emissions à Fécamp, though it is said that M. Legrand, proprietor of the Benedictine liqueur company, has an important financial interest in it. The programme side of the station is linked with the Fédération des Radio Clubs de la Haute Normandie. Both *Poste Parisien* and *Radio-Normandie* derive a large part of their income from British sponsors. The whole of Sunday and a considerable part of weekday air-times are devoted to programmes in English.

Radio-Luxembourg, transmitting on a wavelength of 1304 metres, is the most powerful of the private stations operating from the Continent. It is owned by the Compagnie Luxembourgeoise de Radio Diffusion, but interested financially are "*Le Journal*" and the Agence Havas, the great French newsagency which recently acquired the newsreel "France Actualités." The studios are situated in Luxembourg City and the transmitter is at Junglinster, ten miles away.

During the last two years a host of British firms, including motor manufacturers, cosmetic suppliers, food producers, tobacco companies, department stores and travel interests, have bought time in the Luxembourg programmes. The time-rates are based on a carefully worked-out schedule according to the domestic timetable of English households. The rate may rise to approximately £600 per hour for the most favourable hours of Sunday.

Advertising wordage is restricted to 190 words for an hour's programme, 160 words for a half-hour programme and 95 words for a quarter-hour. A large percentage of the programmes are pre-recorded in the London studios of a British film company; in other cases a complete cast may be flown across to give a quarter-hour programme.

Though the Quai d'Orsay maintains official silence on the subject, it is frequently said that an agreement exists whereby the French government may take over *Radio-Luxembourg* in case of war, should other transmitters on French soil be endangered or destroyed. It is understood that the station is equipped with a duplicate transmitter system, and has a three-year oil storage capacity.

Television Screen for Cinemas

The Scophony television company have recently given demonstrations at their Kensington laboratories of televised pictures projected on to a screen measuring 5 ft. by 4 ft. Definition, light, and general picture quality are reported excellent, except for a slight tendency to flicker, which Scophony intend to correct by raising the projection speed from 25 to 50 pictures per second. The system works on 240 lines.

The company is now experimenting with a receiver-projector designed to screen a picture 13 ft. by 10 ft. This, if successful, will give a well-defined image of approximately the same size as an average cinema screen.

It is understood that Scophony's intention is to develop the 5 ft. by 4 ft. model for use in public viewing-rooms and schools, and to exploit the larger model in cinemas. Installation in cinemas will be completed, according to Mr. Sagall, Scophony chief, before the television of the Coronation in May, 1937.

B.B.C. events

Saturday, Aug. 1st, 4.55 p.m.: Olympic Games.
★Opening ceremony. NATIONAL.
★7.5 p.m.: Salzburg Festival. Orpheus and Eurydice. (Conductor, Bruno Walter.) NATIONAL.

Sunday, Aug. 2nd, 2.30 p.m.: Piano recital, Meyer Rosenstein. NATIONAL.

Monday, Aug. 3rd, 3 p.m.: Brooklands racing. NATIONAL. 4.55 p.m.: Olympic Games. NATIONAL.

Tuesday, Aug. 4th, 8 p.m.: *The Breadwinner*. (Maugham. Producer, Gielgud.) NATIONAL.

★Wednesday, Aug. 5th, 9.50 p.m.: *Night Shift*. (Feature Programme, Beachy Head Lighthouse.) NATIONAL.

★Thursday, Aug. 6th, 8.45 p.m.: *La Vie Parisienne*. A. P. Herbert. REGIONAL.

Friday, Aug. 7th, 10 p.m.: B.B.C. Orchestra. Mozart, Glazounov. (Conductor, Boult.) NATIONAL.

★Saturday, Aug. 8th, 7.55 p.m.: Promenade Concerts, opening night. (Conductor, Sir Henry Wood.) NATIONAL.

Sunday, Aug. 9th, 9 p.m.: B.B.C. Orchestra. (Conductor, Barbirolli.) REGIONAL.

Monday, Aug. 10th, 8 p.m.: Promenade Concert. Wagner. NATIONAL.

★Tuesday, Aug. 11th, 8 p.m.: *Wings over Westralia*. (Sieveking.) REGIONAL.

Wednesday, Aug. 12th, 8 p.m.: Variety. Bobbie Comber, Claude Hulbert. NATIONAL.

Thursday, Aug. 13th, 8.45 p.m.: *Top o' the Tower*. From Blackpool. REGIONAL.

Friday, Aug. 14th, 5.25 p.m.: Olympic Games. Rowing. NATIONAL.

★Saturday, Aug. 15th, 10 p.m.
Thucydides' Sicilian Expedition.
(Felton.) NATIONAL.

Sunday, Aug. 16th, 6.45 p.m.: Recital. Pouishnoff (piano). Betty Bannerman (mezzo-sop.) REGIONAL.

Monday, Aug. 17th, 3 p.m.: Third Test match. Oval. NATIONAL.

★Tuesday, Aug. 18th, 8 p.m.: *Love and Friendship*. (Jane Austen.) NATIONAL.

★Wednesday, Aug. 19th, 8.45 p.m.: Pithead Story. REGIONAL.

Thursday, Aug. 20th, 8 p.m.: Promenade Concert. Debussy-Ravel. REGIONAL.

Friday, Aug. 21st, 9.25 p.m.: Variety. George Beatty, NATIONAL.

Saturday, Aug. 22nd, 1.45 p.m.: Ulster Grand Prix. NATIONAL.

★Sunday, Aug. 23rd, 5.20 p.m.: Chamber music. International String Quartet. NATIONAL.

★Monday, Aug. 24th, 8 p.m. Musical play, *Never Talk to Strangers*. (Gertrude Lawrence.) NATIONAL.

Wednesday, Aug. 26th, 8.45 p.m.: *Salubria*. (Norman Edwards. Producer, Gielgud.) REGIONAL.

★Friday, Aug. 28th, 9 p.m.: *Enoch Arden*. Henry Ainley. Hamilton Harty (piano). REGIONAL.

Saturday, Aug. 29th, 8 p.m.: Promenade Concert. Bach, Grieg. REGIONAL.

Sunday, Aug. 30th, 6.45 p.m.: Recital. Beatrice Harrison (cello). REGIONAL.

★Monday, Aug. 31st, 8 p.m.: *Friday Morning*. (Gielgud. Producer, Creswell.) REGIONAL.

Problems of Sports Commentary

by George Audit

Relays from the Olympic Games this month offer a fine opportunity to B.B.C. commentators. Commander Woodroffe and A. M. Wells will handle the general eye-witness stories, while experts like Abrahams and Howard Marshall are broadcasting accounts of the actual events.

Several years' broadcasting of sports commentaries should have taught the B.B.C.'s Outside Broadcast Department something by now. Are they exploring the technique of their job? Do they ask whether one sport comes over better than another, whether one tone of voice is more intimate than another, whether a specialist is more suitable than a lay reporter? Is there any checking up on experience?

On Derby Day, 1926, the B.B.C. tried to broadcast the rattle of horses' hoofs from a concealed microphone at Tattenham Corner, the shouts of bookies and tipsters and the comments of the crowd. Sheets of rain drowned everything but the attempt had been made. Ten years later a microphone was concealed under the turf at Tattenham Corner; there were no crowd effects, no bookies' orations. A comparison of scripts shows that the commentary was almost identical in form. O.B. work was alive and growing until the B.B.C.'s pioneering spirit fossilised into an inert routine. Harold Abrahams on athletics, Nickalls and Squire on the Boat Race, and George Allison on football, were all exciting because they were all keen on the new method of telling people about their own game. There were failures, but they learned from them.

Since that time the broadcasting of commentary on other sports, like polo, tennis, darts and hockey, has shown that the nature of the sport has something to do with the success of the broadcast. It certainly determines the style of the commentary. This fact was lost sight of when the B.B.C. relayed the last Cup Final. In all ball games the centre of interest follows the ball. In describing football, where the ball moves rapidly from one player to another and there are twenty-two players' names to handle, the commentator has a peculiar problem. That problem is complicated by two other factors: a network of rules (offside, handling ball, etc.) and ninety minutes suspense before the result of the game. The broadcast of the last Cup Final was an interminable gabble of names. "Male gets his head to the ball; Male to Roberts; Roberts to James; James heads back; Bowden is coming through." Half-an-hour of that sort of talk and confusion passes into monotony.

Perhaps the best sport for radio commentary is boxing. Bob Bowman's excellent description of the last Petersen fight set a high standard. He made you feel you were actually sitting in a ringside seat. He talks to people sitting behind. He tells you the comments of spectators alongside. He takes endless pains to make you feel on the spot; running round to see what the fighters look like, persuading people in the audience to come to the microphone. He combines an intimacy of voice with great fluency and a flair for noticing important details. He was assisted by the nature of the sport—only two participants, both widely publicised; a fairly small audience without too much shouting; the whole fight broken into short, independent "rounds" which allow cross-chat in the intervals.

Commentary on the last quarter-of-an-hour of the Darts Championship was another recent success. I have never hit the board with a dart in my life but I enjoyed every minute of that broadcast. The commentator was a proletarian and an expert player who obviously knew the others intimately. "This is big Bill so-and-so; works on the railway; got a throw like a sledge-hammer"—against the whispered excitement of the crowd waiting for him to hit the double-seven and win the match.

Anybody who has heard American radio commentary, particularly by Ted Husing, knows how it can trick you into fancying you are on the sports field. The Americans know that the specialist at the game is not necessarily the best man to describe it. They have developed a reporting technique the basic parts of which are fluency of expression, a friendly tone of voice, a sufficient knowledge of the game, and an eye for significant details. They are also not afraid of bringing the crowd into the microphone. In this country commentators have failed to provide an adequate ear-picture of tennis, football (with the exception of Mr. Allison whose personality makes up for a lot), or racing because of their inflexibility and lack of technique. If some of these gentlemen could forget themselves and their specialised knowledge for the duration of the game, if they could get amongst the crowd and develop an eye for typical incidents, if they could remember that the nature of the game is bound to impose certain restrictions on their method of presentation, we might expect to hear some exciting sport. I want a Harry Hopeful on the sports field instead of a talking examiner. We shall expect to hear something better from Berlin.

New form for Comedy

When are we to get successful radio comedy? We need a campaign about it at the B.B.C. At the moment the programmes are heavily overweighted by serious stuff. The usual explanation is that the Corporation believes its métier to be uplift and education. Perhaps. But I am sure that if comedies came over as successfully as thrillers and fantasies we should get more of them. Why don't they? Mainly because nobody has yet discovered a technique for comedy acting in radio plays.

The acting which suits serious plays on the stage needs very little adaptation for the microphone. But comedy acting in the theatre depends on using voice in contrast to gesture and expression. The actor says one thing in words and allows his movements and behaviour to betray something quite different. So if all you do in producing radio comedy is to put stage comedians before the microphone you halve its effectiveness. If you want proof listen to *The Breadwinner* on August 4th. Ronald Squire plays the lead. He is an unusually successful broadcast actor; his voice comes over well and his diction is beyond praise. Yet the air of gaiety and the sparkle have gone.

If comedy is to take its proper place in the programmes radio producers will either have to handle comedy acting differently or they will be forced to find a form of comedy which is as purely radio as the Disney cartoons are purely film.

GRACE WYNDHAM GOLDIE

B.B.C. Consolidates Television Plans

The B.B.C. have not yet specified the date of commencement of television. Sir W. Womersley, Assistant Postmaster General, recently announced that the equipment at Alexandra Palace was still in process of installation, and that trial demonstrations could not be expected before the latter part of August.

If the installation engineers can hold to this schedule, September should be devoted to testing, and public transmission should begin on or about October 1st. Approximately £180,000 has so far been spent on the London television scheme.

The appointment of a skeleton production staff has been completed. The jobs are: Production Manager, D. H. Munro (ex-studio executive, Broadcasting House); Producers, Cecil Lewis, Dallas Bower and Harry Pringle; Assistant Producer, G. More O'Ferrall; Music Director, Hyam Greenbaum; Stage Manager, Peter Bax; Film Assistant, Major L. G. Barbrook; Booking Manager, W. G. Streeton. The staff salary bill, including directorial and executive salaries, is reported to total over £15,000 a year.

During July the new employees have undergone a course of training in the general knowledge of sound broadcasting. They have visited all the departments of Broadcasting House, and have been schooled in the code and customs of the B.B.C. It is understood that most of them are eagerly looking forward to the completion of this part of the curriculum, and to their transference to Alexandra Palace on August 4th for more advanced and possibly less formal instruction in television itself.

The B.B.C.'s original intention of opening an official public viewing-room in London has now been dropped and the field is left open to commercial firms. The Great Western and Southern Railways, twenty West End firms and a Piccadilly restaurant have applied for advice in the equipment of viewing-rooms. A B.B.C. memorandum, issued for the guidance of such applicatnts, includes the following recommendations :—

"Details of the receivers which will be on the market are not yet known, but it is estimated that in most cases the screen will be of such a size that about 20 to 30 persons will be able to see the picture simultaneously. A suggested arrangement of seating consists of five rows of seats with eight seats per row, the front row being about five feet from the picture. The receivers will be operated from the mains.

"The main sources of interference which may be experienced are the ignition systems of motor cars and certain types of electro-medical apparatus. The extent of such interference at the receiving point can only be determined by experience. The provision of an outdoor aerial is one of the best means of minimising interference."

TELEVISION ABROAD

FRANCE.

The French Post Office is to retain its monopoly of television transmission.

The P.T.T. Television Department, under M. Massabot, began daily transmissions six months ago on the Barthélemy system. Performances of short dramatic sketches and isolated sequences from films are likely to form the backbone of the programmes for some months to come.

Meanwhile M. Massabot is planning a 'tele-

Reproduction of the Barthélemy System

vision newspaper'. His difficulties lie in the hostile attitude of the French film industry and in the technical problems inherent in the direct transmission of exterior scenes. He is therefore concentrating on the perfection of an intermediate film system whereby the scene to be broadcast is recorded on film and the processed picture transmitted some thirty seconds later.

The Compagnie des Compteurs of Montrouge is marketing a television reception set at 8,000 francs.

ITALY.

The Pope is interested in the possibility of setting up a television transmitter in the Vatican. Signor Marconi has had an interview with him during which the project was discussed. (The Vatican has for some years been equipped with a short-wave sound transmitter for use in the Catholic interest.)

HOLLAND.

The Philips laboratories at Eindhoven have been carrying out television tests on a wave-length of about 7 metres. It is understood that they plan to standardise their definition at between 350 and 400 lines.

RUSSIA.

The Television Institute of the Soviet Union is building a high-definition transmitter in Moscow. 20–25 miles radius of reception is expected, and the equipment will make possible the transmission of exteriors as well as studio scenes. It is reported that a further station is contemplated for Leningrad.

GERMANY.

Two-hour evening transmissions are continuing in Berlin on a 180-line 25-picture system. Public demonstrations are given on a large screen in the Telefunken theatre. Meanwhile research is in progress for the designing of a high-definition 300-line system.

TELEVISION TESTS ONLY AT RADIOLYMPIA

The 1936 National Radio Exhibition will open at Olympia on August 26th. Over 100 firms will exhibit, and attractions will include broadcast performances by B.B.C. stars and demonstrations of the new 'rainbow tuning' system by which the accurate tuning of a given station is indicated by coloured lights in the set.

But the main question which manufacturers and public alike are asking is: "Will television sets be seen working at the Exhibition?"

As far as the radio industry is concerned, no difficulty exists. Several firms have already begun the small-scale production of sets, and specimens of these will almost certainly be on show. But programmes will be lacking. The B.B.C. has once more been forced to postpone the television dateline, and all that is likely to be on the air during the Exhibition is a series of tests from Alexandra Palace. Such preliminary tests are hardly likely to be a reliable advertising medium for the industry's new wares.

Meanwhile a certain amount of dissatisfaction is growing within the trade at the continual announcements in the press and in speeches that television will never replace sound broadcasting. Lord Hirst, at a recent meeting of the General Electric Co., said: "When television is available all will have to submit to a darkened room, and those who wish to enjoy the entertainment must give themselves over to it and sit in front of the television screen. My opinion is that television will supplement radio but never supplant it."

It is felt that such statements, by constant repetition, will mislead potential buyers of sets and will build up the impression that the British trade is either unable or unwilling to face up to television demands, thus creating a favourable market for imported sets of foreign manufacture.

U.S. Government checks on Television

"Sound radio is used, not only as a primary source of entertainment and education, but also as a background while reading, resting, working or playing bridge. Looking at television requires concentration."

So spoke James M. Skinner, president of the Philadelphia Storage Battery Co. (makers of Philco radios), when giving evidence before the U.S. Federal Communications Commission's recent enquiry into the possible competition of television with movie, radio and press.

"Furthermore," pursued the Philco chief, "the gregarious instinct of the human race to gather in crowds is fundamental and will never be changed by television or anything else."

David Sarnoff, president of R.C.A., was inclined to agree. He asserted that the present sound broadcasting service would contine uninterrupted, and that television, when it becomes a commercial proposition, must seek new fields of entertainment. He pointed out that the American people have $3,000,000,000 invested in home radio sets.

William S. Paley, Cloumbia Broadcasting chief, boldly challenged conservatism. "Columbia is getting ready for television," he announced. "The American public have a right to expect from us a major contribution to the benefits they may receive from television and every other appropriate advance in the technique and the art of broadcasting. I promise such a contribution to them now." He went on to plead for sound economic development of the new art in view of the huge sums which must shortly be sunk in it, and for adherence to the competition principle to ensure to the public a constantly improving service.

T. A. M. Craven, the Commission's chief engineer, told of the battle of American research men to harness the higher reaches of the frequency-spectrum. Though it was now difficult to operate up to 30,000 kilocycles, he stated, there was no reason why frequencies of several million kilocycles should not be used in the future. He hinted that the U.S. Army and Navy were interested in high-frequency development and might seek reservation of certain parts of the spectrum for their sole use.

PHOTOGRAPHIC HANDBOOK 1936

edited by G. P. Kendall and Frank Whitby (Newnes 3*s.* 6*d.*).

An informative collection of articles on all aspects of still and movie camerawork. It is designed for the amateur worker and provides much interesting information and gives many direction points for the beginner. The still section is excellent, but the movie section tends to be scrappy.

£100,000 SPENT ON SUPER PRODUCTION
HUGE SALARIES PAID FOR STARS
ENORMOUS EXPENSES DURING LOCATION
AND YET! WITH THE TRADE-SHOW A FEW DAYS OFF
AN IMPORTANT 'SHOT' HAS BEEN OVERLOOKED——*PANIC*
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THREE EXPERTS GIVE VIEWS ON COLOUR

Robert Edmond Jones, Colour director, "La Cucaracha," "Becky Sharp," "Dancing Pirate."

Anthony Gross, Film Cartoonist.

S. John Woods, Abstract Painter.

The point about colour in films, according to Robert Edmond Jones, noted colour designer, is not whether it is here to stay or not. He is emphatic in his belief that the colour film will soon be a standard item, and that the black-and-white film will be in about the same place as the silent movie is today. The point to which Jones has pushed on is this: now that we have colour, what shall we do with it?

Most of the technical problems of colour are now either solved or in process of being solved by continual experimentation. There is no worry as to whether colour will eliminate some actresses and favour others, for the art of make-up has solved that. Only the eyes present a colour problem, with light, pale blue eyes remaining an unsolved difficulty to the colour-film makers. "The Hollywood actress today goes through a series of tremendously elaborate tests under lighting." Several weeks of that were consumed on Marlene Dietrich.

With "La Cucaracha," "Becky Sharp" and the recent "Dancing Pirate," first colour-musical, behind him, Jones is interested less now in the technical aspects and more in the mental ones. What can he do with this new medium? "Do you remember in the silent movies," says Jones, "how, when a gun was shot, someone backstage might give the sound effect by hitting a leather cushion with a buggy-whip? Suppose, in a colour film, you suddenly let the screen flash red . . . wouldn't that be what you might call your 'colour effect'?"

Colour, Jones believes, has an emotional effect like that of music, and should be used sparingly and subtly, with the real bursts of colour being saved for climaxes. He is interested in the effects that can be obtained by "cutting" with colour, contrasting tone with tone, and leading up to "a final 'bang' " of colour.

"Many important people in Hollywood are a bit naïve about colour films," he says. "They seem to believe that now that the colour process has been perfected they can rush right in and make important colour movies. That is not true. The difficulty, however, is not a mechanical one. It is not behind or in the camera, but before it. Obviously, the camera must reproduce whatever is placed before it, and this requires much painstaking study. The colours photographed in many scenes may be very beautiful and highly satisfactory when considered by themselves, yet not harmonise, the one with the other. Music in sound pictures 'acts' as an actor does. Colour will ultimately 'act' also."

After the premier of "Dancing Pirate," produced by Pioneer Pictures and distributed by RKO Radio, colour-designer Robert Edmond Jones will go back to Hollywood, where, in addition to his activities in the colour field, he will resume contact with the stage which made his work famed. With Walter Huston he will discuss plans for the screen version of Sinclair Lewis's "Dodsworth," in which Huston starred, and then they must plan for the presentation on the New York stage in the Fall, under the producing ægis of Max Gordon, of "Othello."

* * *

ANTHONY GROSS, now making cartoons for London Film Productions, has made a reputation in the most diverse fields. In 1925 as an infant prodigy of seventeen he exhibited his pictues in those venerable establishments—the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon. During the Riff War he travelled through Morocco with a paint-box; a little later he went to Spain where he achieved fame as a bull fighter.

From his history it is obvious that Mr. Gross does not fear such facts as wars and bulls, so in the cinema he has no fear of the new bogey, colour. He says, "We must face it." But not blindly, nor with the picture postcard's regard for natural colours. Of all colour films, Mr. Gross selects "Cucaracha" as the one which the future will remember as "a gem" because natural colour was not allowed to be too natural.

As a painter, Anthony Gross goes to the Tate Gallery to estimate the value of colour in the past,

Anthony Gross

and to find those painters who have something to teach the producers of colour films. He chooses the pre-Rafaelites, "because," as he puts it, "they were working at the time when photography was first invented, and because of this they see the Renaissance photographically."

Mr. Gross finds their colours are photographic, for example they used a blue which is almost a Technicolour blue; while such a painter as Wallis is distinctly cinematic in the conception of his picture "The death of Chatterton" in the Tate.

In making colour films, Anthony Gross feels that it is necessary to use very definite colours, in order that each figure will stand out clearly. For example, Miss A. should always be dressed in blue, while Mrs. B. is easily discovered because her special colour is red: the pretty blonde wears pink, the old woman black, and so on. In this way, colour is built up from a utilitarian point of view to assist in the delineation of character in place of being incidental.

"Though this use of colour may sound primitive," continued Mr. Gross, "it is no more so than the cinema itself. It is, in fact, making the same use of colour as Chaplin does of baggy trousers and bushy moustaches, which we have by no means outgrown."

* * *

S. JOHN WOODS, abstract painter and authority on abstract art on which he has written extensively, tells *W.F.N.* that though he believes in colour for abstract films, he is against its use in naturalistic films. "Because, since the cinema is essentially a synthetic form, colour's only practical assistance to naturalistic films is to make them more like picture postcards; and they have nothing to do with art, and not much to do with entertainment."

Mr. Woods finds that the average person is practically unconscious of colour. "Posters give a key to the general level." But from a study of them he thinks that there is a slow but definite growth of interest in colour. For example, if this were not so, the statistical posters of transport in the underground, in which a basic design carried out in different colours according to subject, would have been unpopular and too 'modernist' for the general public. "This, I think," continued Mr. Woods, "leads one to suppose that there is a potential audience for coloured films provided colour is used properly."

Before colour can be used in anything but an incidental manner, Mr. Woods thinks there must be a great deal of research into the psychological effect of colours. "Most people are unaware of this psychological effect although it is continually reflected in our idioms. For instance, we must have an idea in our minds when we say such and such a thing in 'pure white', 'dead black', or use the description 'purple passion', 'green with envy', 'seeing red' and 'feeling blue'. Again, we all tend to associate yellow and green with spring, and brown with autumn; while we use such adjectives as 'happy' to describe a particular colour. We also have the tradition of pink being the colour for a baby girl and blue for a baby boy."

John Woods also considers the question of colour and sound; the correct synchronisation of yellow with the sound of the piccolo, and the obviously wrong synchronisation of yellow with the note of the double bass.

"I find that correct synchronisation depends on vibrations. In high notes the vibrations are quick while in a high colour like yellow there is a rapid vibration of light. Therefore the sound of the double bass would be in greater harmony with the colour effect of dark brown sacking than enamel of the same colour on a highly polished car.

"All these associations must be studied in the development of the colour film, and laws created so that a precise form can be evolved."

Puppet film makers busy in U.S.S.R. and Germany

FAIRY TALES AND SATIRE

TWO YOUNG GERMANS, the brothers Diehl, are at last reaping the rewards of careful research, of long hours and patient study in successfully producing talking puppet films. Their films are made entirely with puppet actors. They have found a method of constructing the bodies so that they will retain any normal position without support. This has done away with the necessity of using strings as with marionettes, or any mechanism to make them move.

Amazing patience is needed, as a single exposure is made of each phase of a movement separately. Careful study was made to find the right material that would make a good picture; hard material cracked and soft material shrunk under the heat of the powerful lamps used for filming. A tiny scratch would appear to be a huge scar or a minute wrinkle, a deep furrow. The heads of the puppets are modelled by expert sculptors, each face having an almost uncanny amount of character; an 'aristocrat' is given a high forehead and an aquiline nose; an autocratic, intolerant man has a deep chin and narrow lips. A mechanism was invented whereby the chin, mouth and eyelids can be moved, giving the appearance of speech and altering the stereotyped facial expressions. The saying "The camera never lies" applies even more acutely to filming puppets; it reveals everything which is faked. Great trouble is taken to have every detail correct. In the films of modern-day, you see and hear a car travelling; hear a radio working; a telephone-bell shrill—everything as correct as it would be in an ordinary film with human actors. In the fairy tale films—in which these Germans are specialising, each historical detail is correct: armour, swords, etc., made by a goldsmith, are copied from museums as also are the clothes.

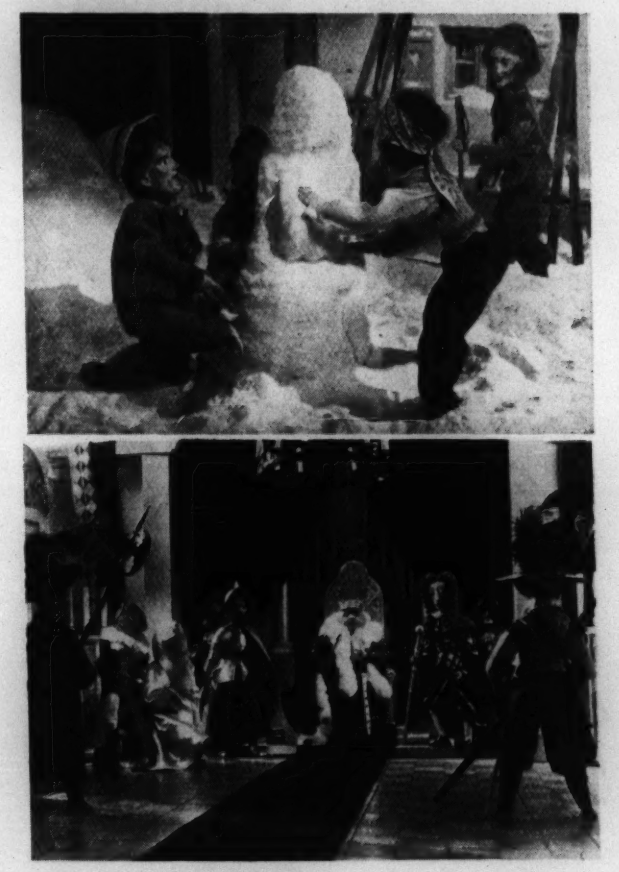
Having seen these puppet films, I was amazed at the smoothness of the movements and synchronisation of speech and music. One scene of a film depicts a race over a mountain by a puppet on foot and another in a car. You see the puppet get into the car, hear the engine start and the car move off—you next see the one on foot taking short cuts, climbing the sides of the mountain, hand over hand. Each movement is so smooth and naturally done it is difficult to realise that the actor is anything but human. To see one puppet climbing and jumping over a rock precipice while the other races round the mountain road in his car is to realise anew the amazing possibilities in this new field of film-endeavour. In these films the puppets never appear to be anything but puppets; the producers relying on making the world they move in as real as possible.

These two Germans started by making publicity films and short stories and having them shown in the ordinary cinemas. Recently, they have produced three-reel films taken from Grimms' and Hauff's Fairy Tales, which so interested the Reich that they have ordered five hundred copies of one film for exhibiting in the State schools.

Russia, also, has produced a puppet film after two years of tedious experiments. It has one human actor—a boy of fourteen—and three thousand puppet players. A full-length film, of eight reels, it is entitled *The New Gulliver* and deals with Gulliver's treatment at the hands of the Liliputians from a modern angle.

The picture is based on "Gulliver's Travels" by Jonathan Swift, and none of the sarcasm is lost by its interpretation by puppets and the use of modern methods of warfare and transport.

The original puppet was three inches tall and had to submit to the most gruesome humiliations of amputations and pinchings before the proper material was discovered which would yield to the necessary manipulations to form the different expressions. The players, the outcome of careful and patient study, are minute puppets made of wood, metal and rubber. They are no bigger than your little finger. Each of these dolls are perfect in every detail; all their joints move, even their fingers, which need a microscope to be seen. All the usual human emotions are registered on their tiny faces: hunger, courage, anger, elation and fright. These puppets have no hidden mechanism. A separate 'shot' is taken of each movement, about twenty-five shots being required to make a puppet lift a hand. You can get some idea of the patience required when you realise a 'frame shot' is a section of a film an inch high and an inch and a quarter wide. Each of the chief characters have as many as two to three hundred sets of heads, capable of expressing emotions and reactions difficult to obtain if only one plastic face had been used to each.



Gebrüder Diehl Film

"The New Gulliver"

No little credit goes to Lew Schwartz who composed the music in the film. It was not easy to make the orchestra, composed entirely of puppets, play in tempo with the action and the pace of the film. Mr. Ptusko, the director of the film, said :—

"Our greatest accomplishment was the achievement of harmony between all the parts of this completely experimental film: *i.e.*, between subject and content, between the acting of the dolls and of the living hero, between artificial settings and real nature."

It is bewildering to watch the boy Gulliver being gassed and hauled through Liliput, bound to tractors. In another scene, his legs are used to form an arch for a tricycle parade of Liliputian soldiers.

G. BRETON-SMITH

MAKE THAT VILLAGE A STAR (For the Amateur in the Country)

BY ANDREW BUCHANAN

"I would begin the film with a close-up of a signpost bearing the name of the place, shot from a very low angle."

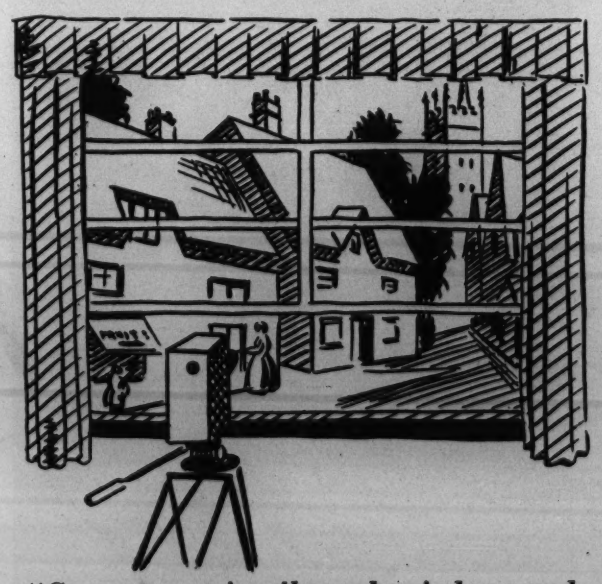
I CAN THINK of nothing easier for the amateur to film really badly than a country village, a pile of ruins, or a cathedral, for, on the surface, his story is ready made, and the cottages, or the stately spires, reduce the necessity for picture composition to a minimum. Consequently, there is little left to do but shoot "views" famous to all tourists, pan up and down steeples, and use filters that make the sky jet black, and the buildings snow white. Maybe life will be so utterly still in these parts that the producer will feel it necessary to introduce "movement" into his scenes, and so he will induce his sister to appear in every shot, wandering about like a sleepwalker —strolling through arches, crossing roads, or leaning heavily over old bridges.

Apart from ruining sequences in this manner, it is probable he will not attempt to capture the spirit of the place, because he did not begin by studying it. Now, it is a surprising fact that immediately one regards the city, town, or village, in which one resides, through the eye of the camera the place becomes, or should become, transformed into something unfamiliar—by reason of the countless features accentuated by the inquisitiveness of the lens—all of them creating, *together*, the fundamental character of the location, and unless that character and/or atmosphere is captured, and projected on to the screen, the film can be of little importance. I advise the amateur to remember that.

The second point is that a village need not be *famous* before it can be filmed. I have a preference for places which have rarely been heard of, save by the inhabitants. Rarely does the professional producer discover an utterly unknown girl and lift her to stardom. It would be better if he did, instead of concentrating only on established stars, casting them irrespective of suitability. Similarly, the amateur should not film "the renowned beauty spot," but should give prominence to the unknown village, discovering its hidden beauties, and emphasising the part it plays, however small, in the life of the nation. Leave the famous places to makers of picture postcards, and concentrate upon that tiny hamlet you found by accident when on your way to somewhere else. But whatever its character may be, it has to be approached with extreme care, and not shot from any angle, anywhere.

A stranger becomes acquainted with a place only after he has wandered around its back streets for a few days. He would learn nothing about it by standing at the top of its main street and staring at the view before him—which would be the equivalent of the conventional opening Long Shot that begins every poorly made scenic film. And so the first step is to study the location, and prepare a simple script based on one's observations. Why does the village appeal to you? How do the inhabitants earn their livings? Are they mainly agricultural? Do they depend on the sea? Is there a tannery there? Whatever the main occupation of the villagers may be, you will find signs of it in unexpected places. Look for them, and list them down.

I would begin the film with a close-up of a signpost bearing the name of the place, shot from a very low angle. If it is a fishing village, I should follow the introductory shot with several well-chosen close ups, beginning with one in which sea waves filled the screen—rolling on the beach, or dashing against the harbour wall, followed by strong hands mending nets, sorting fish, and painting old boats. The effect of these shots would be increased if they were divided by shots of gulls swooping for food on the quayside, perched on mast tops, or floating around the anchored fishing boats. Such brief scenes create a prologue to the film, and plant the fact that the village whose name was seen on the signpost is a fishing village. Do not worry about long shots at this stage. Introduce the place to the audience gradually, each series of shots revealing more and more, so that by the time a long shot does appear, everyone will be able to *see into* it with understanding, having meandered around the streets beforehand.



"Camera peeping through windows and open doorways."

And so now we have emphasised the dependence of the villagers upon the sea, we should take a look at their dwellings, and we might well begin with a few studies of their trim little back gardens, for the back of a house always reveals more about its inmates than the expressionless front. We will find that the sea invades them in the form of shells set, a trifle too decoratively, in borders—coral heaped by kitchen doors—and, perhaps, an anchor, or a rusty mine, perched up in the middle of an unpretentious bed of flowers. These shots might be taken to include glimpses of the cottages behind, but a few should certainly be filmed from within, the camera peeping through windows and open doorways. Maybe one of the womenfolk would agree to wash her vegetables in the doorway, so that we may observe her type—for, until now, we have concentrated solely upon the men. Next, we should wander into the street, and take a look at the front of the cottages and if a seagull should be perched on one of the chimneys, shoot it, and list it down to be inserted between your back garden shots. If an old fisherman, now retired, spends his days sitting by his porch, shoot him, too, and also the entwined hearts tattooed on the back of his hand, which is gripping his blackened pipe.

Such details help enormously to create the true spirit of the place. Where do these folk buy their food and clothes? In a cluster of tiny shops round the bend. We go there. The sun blinds are down and flap furiously, for the wind is forever blowing in these parts. We take a close-up of one flapping. It will cut in neatly with a flapping sail down in the harbour, and that flapping curtain in a cottage window. These three shots, together with a glimpse of the sky filled with scurrying clouds, will make the audience almost feel a draught in the theatre.

We are now justified, I think, in taking a carefully selected long shot of the village, with, if possible, the shops in the foreground, and a glimpse of the cottages somewhere in the background. That should give one the impression of having walked round the village and, on strolling away, of taking a last look back over one's shoulder. But in this long shot we see, for the first time, the village church behind the shops. That is most important, and so we approach it in the next shot, but we do not pan from the top of the steeple to the bottom of the main porch. Instead, we begin our survey with at least half a dozen close studies, which analyse the worn stonework, the windows, the old entrance, interesting tombstones, and the tower. Then we take the camera back to embrace the entire building. This enables us to see the quiet beauty of

Wealth of the Home Libraries

THE SUBSTANDARD libraries are going to be the repertory supply of the future. This fact arises from a survey of the current catalogues of the home-movie libraries. Progress to date has admittedly been by guesswork. Quantity of supply and not quality of films has been the guide to most library build-ups. Thus in Pathéscope, Kodascope, Ensign, G.B. Equipments, Western Electric and Visual Education film lists you will find the sweepings of the studios, mostly British, on 8mm., 9.5mm. and 16mm.

But you will also find some of the most important films of movie's history. How they got there is nobody's business. To find *The Covered Wagon* in 6 reels in between five episodes of *The Indians are Coming* and *Somehow Good* in 8 mm. Kodascope, will defeat all those who cock a snook at the home-movie field. William Wyler's *Hell's Heroes* is another discovery. Unobtainable on 35mm. from Universal, Kodascope list it at 17*s.* 6*d.* a night for 5 reels.

This is just an aperitif. Turn to Pathéscope. Here are most of the "classics" of the German golden period—*Destiny*, *Caligari*, *Cinderella*, *Siegfried*, *Vaudeville*, *Metropolis*, *The Spy*, *Faust*, and *Chronicle of the Grieshuus* (not shown in this country theatrically)—all on 9.5mm. going into hundreds of homes. Whether these miniature versions of one-time great films differ from the original theatre versions is not stated. Other odd and interesting subjects are Griffith's *Orphans of the Storm*, Riefenstahl's *Blue Light*, Fanck's *Pitz Palü* and Volkoff's *Kean* in the same library, while Kodascope keep pace with the "classics" by listing Lubitsch's early *Sumurun* (under the title *One Arabian Night*) and Hitchcock's *The Lodger* and *Blackmail*.

As you might expect, all libraries are strong in comedy. Most early Chaplin's of the Mutual and Essanay periods, including the immortal *Pawnshop* and *Easy Street*, are on Kodascope 16mm. So also are good examples of Raymond Griffith, Harold Lloyd, Ben Turpin, Snub Pollard, Laurel and Hardy and Harry Langdon. Ensign offer *Safety Last* (Lloyd), *California Straight Ahead* (Denny) and *Saturday Afternoon* (Langdon), as well as a handful of very early Chaplin's under disguised titles. Cartoons are plentiful. Early Disney's, both Mickey and the Symphonies, Mutt and Jeff, Krazy Kat, Felix and the famous *Out of the Inkwell* series supply a history of the cartoon unobtainable on standard sized film.

In the non-fictional class, British documentary has so far not reached beyond the well-known G.P.O. and Royal Empire Film Libraries, but a star entry in Kodascope is Schoedsack and Cooper's *Grass* and Alex Shaw's cruise films are held by Western Electric. G.B. Equipments supplement an orgy of their parent company's feature films by a selection of G.B.I.'s educationals and documentaries, including the *Face of Britain* series and Mary Field's farm films. *Man of Aran* is also given. Nearly all Andrew Buchanan's *Cinemagazines* are recommended as good additions for the Gebescope family party next Christmas. Kodak is strong in industrials, copies being presented by the firms in question. Best known among these are Levers' *Port Sunlight* and the Cadbury films. The supply of casual travel films is astounding. No city in the world appears to be missing from the "interest" class of all substandard libraries.

Most plentiful of all, however, are Westerns, suitable for the whole family, ranging from Hoot Gibson in *The Rawhide Kid* to Art Accord in *Rustler's Ranch*.

The bulk of the supply is silent but G.B.E. and Western are catering exclusively for sound. It is only waiting for some ambitious firm to make a really good sound projector marketed at a low price for the whole movement to spring alive. The Lord Moyne Committee heard some anxious questions about the growth of the home-movie field. Exhibitors may well be apprehensive if the substandard libraries are once organised on an imaginative basis. Till now the movement has been haphazard. It cannot always be so. The real fight will come when the producing firms, egged on by the exhibitors, will refuse to sell the substandard rights of their features even if they are old enough to be useless. Then the libraries will have to begin thinking for themselves.

WE HOPE THAT

London films will make up its mind once for all about *Conquest of the Air*.

* * *

The Board of Education will commit itself—even a little—on the subject of Cinema.

MAKE THAT VILLAGE A STAR (cont.)

the churchyard, enhanced by ancient trees, with branches bent so low as to almost touch the few flowers sturdy enough to face the winds, which grow out of the sunken stones. These create a somewhat softer picture, in comparison to the sea and the harbour, and serve as a link to introduce the rural beauty which comes to view as we journey inland.

A farmstead lies to the right, and cows are slowly plodding past a broken gate, to be milked. A cart, laden with hay, ambles by, leaving a trail of straw on branches and hedges. A few pieces of straw clinging to the hedge are worth a close up, for whilst the camera turns, the wind snatches them away—another reminder. In a rising field horses are ploughing. The camera, tilted downwards, captures an impressive close-up of the soil being sliced and turned over. Then a medium shot shows the ploughman pulling up his team, so that he may gaze at the sky. It looks threatening. Next a close-up of the ploughman, his hand shading his eyes, scanning the sky. Shoot an additional shot of sky alone, to follow the ploughman's close-up. The next shot is of a fisherman, in a similar position to the ploughman, also shading his eyes and scanning the sky—a simple example of associating images, enabling us to return to the sea. A long shot reveals him standing on the harbour, gazing anxiously out to sea. A close-up of mammoth sea waves, dashing angrily against the harbour wall, follows, and the urgency of life in this village is vividly felt.

Now, instead of ending on this fierce note, one might return to the churchyard just in time to see an old fisherman's wife walking slowly up to the entrance. She pauses, and looks up at the sky. A close-up of her face reveals her anxious expression, and if this is followed by a shot of the sky, the cause of her anxiety is clear, whilst a medium shot, taken from an elevated position to dwarf her figure, shows her resuming her walk into the church, which reveals her refuge from the elements—a quietly impressive ending.

" Followed by strong hands mending nets "

'WHEN THE DOCUMENTARY FILM

——deals with real life in a way which is vital and entertaining . . . it can no more fail to secure a circulation among the public than does the well-edited and keenly-written newspaper. . . . '—THE CINEMA (22/1/36).

THAT IS WHY WE AT THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

——have set ourselves out to be specialists in making realist films of Industry, Education and the work of Government Departments which will be entertaining as well as instructive, which will be gay as well as dramatic.

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Short Films may Feature in New Quota Act

THE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE which is now discussing the Quota Act has paid marked attention to the lack of short films in the theatres. Producers of short films—and not least of these are the public relations departments of Government and industry—may find that one result of the enquiry is to make the exhibition of a proportion of short British films compulsory.

The spokesmen for short films have brought out some interesting points. They claim that short films represent:

(1) a training-ground for directors and technicians;
(2) an experimental ground for new ideas;
(3) a more powerful medium for the description of British life and manners to audiences at home and abroad than is offered by long films;
(4) a preparatory ground for television;
(5) an opportunity for social education within the ordinary limits of an entertainment programme.

The great question in the past has been to get these short films into the theatres. For a dozen reasons it has been difficult. The spread of the two-feature programme has made two features, newsreel, and an occasional cartoon the rule in three thousand theatres out of Great Britain's four thousand four hundred. The remaining thousand or so one-feature theatres are available to shorts, but because they are situated for the most part in the smaller towns where people go early to bed, the prices paid for short films are not high.

Anybody who invests more than £500 in a short film will have difficulty in getting his money back. The market pays for an average short from £700 to £900. When distribution costs are taken off and a small profit allowed £500 is the figure which remains for production itself.

There are exceptions, of course. Some short films may become featurettes and break into the big three thousand. The latest example of this is *Night Mail*. But, by and large, the shorts people have a thin time under present conditions.

Proposals recently made for improving the position are various. They may be tabulated as follows:—

(1) Make it compulsory to show one British short for every four American or foreign shorts.
(2) Make it compulsory to show a percentage of short films in every programme.
(3) Make the exhibitors pay a reasonable price for short films so that shorts producers will be encouraged.
(4) Prevent the renters from throwing in shorts with feature films as they now do and discourage the exhibitor from treating short films as fill-ups to be booked by numbers.
(5) Break down the programme limit of 3¼ hours now insisted on by renters so that an extra short can be fitted in to the two-feature programme.

Not all these suggestions are practical, but they demonstrate at least that the shorts people are fighting for a place in the programme and mean to have it.

One factor in the situation must interest every public relations officer. Some of the best of the short films in recent years in this country have been sponsored films made by public relations departments. *Contact*, *Air Port*, *Industrial Britain*, *Night Mail* and *Weather Forecast* were all sponsored films. And so long as these sponsored films represent genuine entertainment they have been welcomed in the theatres.

Any additional opening in the theatres which may come from a revisal of the Quota Act will serve as a further incentive to sponsors. The short film is their opportunity. They can afford to spend more money on their films than the ordinary commercial operator. They can afford to be more ambitious in their production technique. They can even afford to lose on production so long as the film is good enough to earn wide circulation.

The sponsors have everything to gain from a larger theatre demand. And everyone from producer to exhibitor must welcome their participation. They bring money for production. They introduce new subject matter. They encourage experiment in technique. The only rule that will be forced on them—and this is rigid—is that they must keep direct publicity out and follow the ordinary tenets of entertainment.

Travel Association Projects Britain Abroad

THE TRAVEL ASSOCIATION Film Unit is having great success abroad with its films. New markets are being opened up in which all short films descriptive of the British scene are likely to benefit. *So This is London* is circulating in sixteen countries. Scandinavian theatres have given these travel films an especially warm welcome. Other countries that have taken distribution are South Africa, Australia, the U.S.A., France, Latvia, Finland, Mexico, Japan, Spain, Czecho-Slovakia.

The Travel Association operates in the general interests of British travel and industrial development: drawing its funds partly from the Government and partly from the interests affected. Films are only part of its publicity work. Through all British Embassies, overseas wireless stations and sub-offices on the Continent, it carries on a widespread service of information on Britain's attractions and Britain's industrial facilities. It operates with the British Council, a body closely related to the Foreign Office, for the promotion of cultural relations with foreign countries.

Holiday resorts and industrial development councils have in the past looked to the Association for much of their guidance on film matters. For four years the Association has operated its own production unit and built its own library of films. Its theatrical successes include West End premières.

Head of the Travel Association is L. A. de L. Meredith, C.M.G., O.B.E., one-time official of the Department of Overseas Trade. His chief aide is A. F. Primrose, O.B.E. The Travel Association unit represents one of our most valuable avenues to understanding abroad.

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*OR YOUR BISCUITS, OR YOUR CIGARETTES, OR WHATEVER YOU MANUFACTURE.

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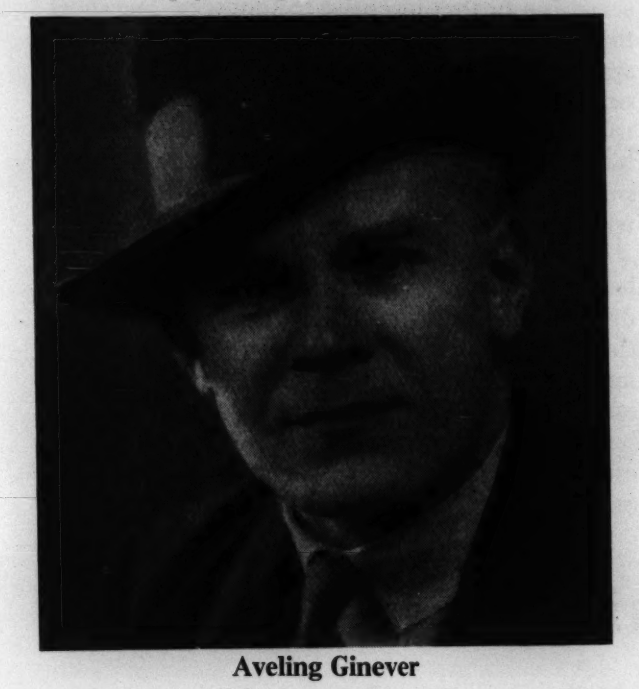
Religious Barnstormers Sidetrack Church Films

WE ASKED Aveling Ginever to tell us about the churches Would they make religious films or films of social service? Would they try to put their films in the theatres? Would the Methodists work with Anglicans or break loose into Evangelical sob stories?

Aveling Ginever is an expert. He has seen the growth of the religious film movement from its beginning. He has made more films for the churches than any other producer: films like *Mastership*, *Service* and *In Our Time*. He discusses the psychological problems of religious



Aveling Ginever

appeal with the detachment of a man who has heard all the sectarians in full cry and knows their differences.

After five years in the troubled politics of the Church he finds Wardour Street quiet to the point of gentility. He does not see how under the present policy the Religious Film Society can be a binding force on the various denominations. The differences of outlook are too deep.

The situation at present is that the Religious Film Society attempts to combine the film energies of both Methodists and Anglicans. It is the executive body of the Cinema Church Council and the Missionary Film Society, on both of which all denominations are represented. But except for the relatively small matter of subscriptions, finance comes from one source. That source is Rank: miller, Methodist and millionaire. And having spent £25,000 on the cause, Rank calls the tune.

The Religious Film Society has turned out four films—*Mastership* and *Service* by Ginever, *Barabbas* by Sloane, and *The Common Round* by Rank's commercial organisation, National Films. All of them were Methodist chosen and Methodist made. The Anglican church may have cathedrals and seats in the Lords, but, on the Religious Film Society, it is a poor relation.

Ginever says there are two bases on which co-operation between the churches is possible. If they would allow the artist to interpret religion on the screen, they would find a common ground. If they directed their efforts to social service, they would again find a common ground in the health and housing and welfare of the people.

But the churches, it seems, have not been willing to trust the artist; and the quiet educational atmosphere of social service has not seemed exciting enough for the more evangelical spirits.

As in education, the development of the religious film has been greatly hampered by the exhibitionists. The barnstormers and the showmen have seized the opportunity of film to increase the appeal of their services. For the time being they have focused attention on the more melodramatic uses of film, and the more penetrating uses are being lost sight of.

It is difficult to see how the Anglican church can agree to the methods of, say, the Rev. W. H. H. Lax. Its "mystical content" is not expressed in quite the same way. Lax presents his gospel in terms of men picked from the gutter, saved from drunkenness and wife-beating and, after a "glorious spiritual resurrection," brought to "honour and success."

If the Religious Film Society is to represent a collective force, says Ginever, it must make its appeal on deeper grounds than these. The solution would seem to be that sectional interests should be followed sectionally. The Religious Film Society, as the combining unit, will have to take its stand on the common ground of social service, and on a really æsthetic interpretation of a common Gospel.

From "In Our Time"

News Review

Public relations pictures are booming. 1937 crop of productions completed or scheduled already exceeds 100. One company alone has schedule of 53.

* * *

Austin Motors have another quintette of one-reelers under general title *The Road Leads On*. Four of these are in the cutting room; fifth nearing completion. Productions supervised by J. F. Bramley, Austin film executive; photographed for Publicity Films by T. R. Thumbwood.

* * *

Chocolate and custard will be the dominant themes of two other programmes, sponsored by the houses of Cadbury and Bird. Bird's entry into public relations film field not unconnected with experience of Cadbury. Bird's Merchandising director is George Cadbury, younger son of cocoa family.

* * *

Willard Van der Veer, ace cameraman of Audio Productions Inc., leading public relations film producers in U.S.A., on a visit to London in connection with an Anglo-American film assignment. Enthusiastic over progress made by public relations units in last three years. Declares the technical work on this side of the Atlantic is now equal to that of U.S. (except in cartoon field). Admits that U.S.A. has nothing equivalent to British documentary school. Van der Veer is one of eighteen members of the 78 Club, band of hardy men who have been 78 degrees North *and* South of the Equator. He filmed Byrd's first expedition to Little America.

* * *

Large patent medicine combine likely to be the next entrants into the film propaganda field, with a scheme running into five figures.

* * *

Paul Stein, who completed *Cafe Colette* July 20, supervising unusual public relations film for Garrick. Details next month.

* * *

Cape Town Railways and Harbours Board reports: "In the field of film propaganda, an agreement was completed whereby the sound films produced under the auspices of the Administration are placed on circuit throughout Great Britain." Describing showing of abridged version of Witwatersrand gold-mining film at London Plaza, the report adds that "the resultant publicity for South Africa cannot be overestimated." This London showing was arranged by International Productions Ltd.

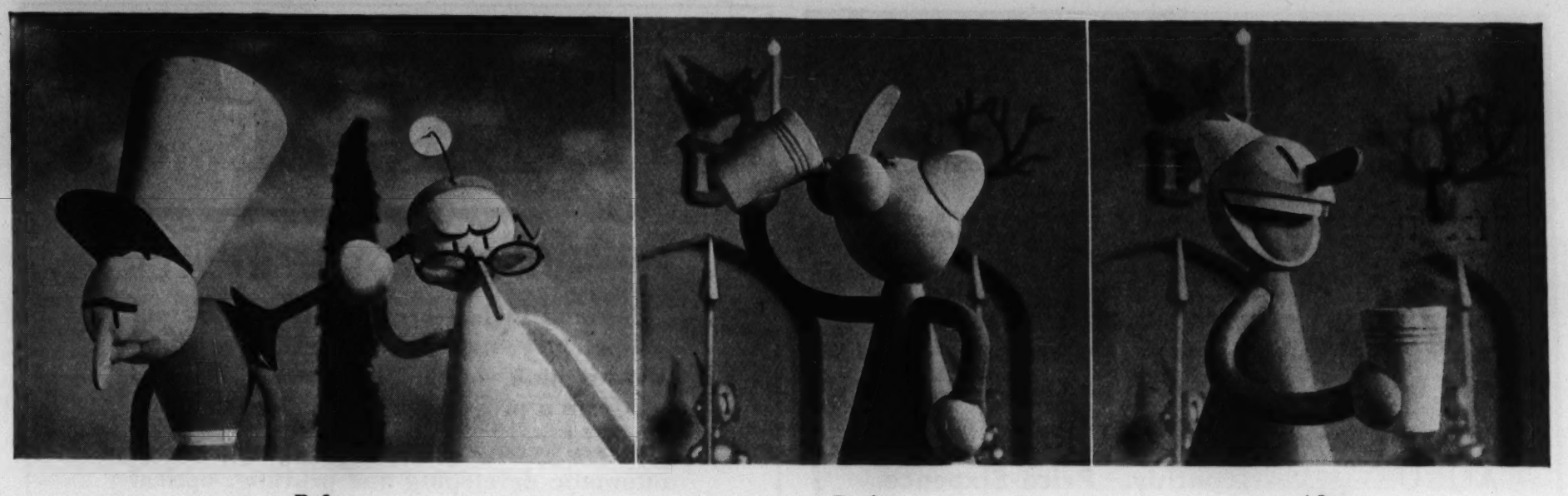
* * *

Further reports from South Africa indicate that a "new and comprehensive publicity film 10,000 to 12,000 ft. in length" is now being prepared. It will depict "principal historical and scenic features of the Union, and give a brief representation of present-day living conditions." Symphonic music is being used in place of commentary wherever possible, to overcome the language difficulty.

* * *

Sunderland the next Northern town to star in propaganda film. G.B. to make a picture stressing its historical and industrial associations.

Sydney Box



Before During After

Colour puppets perform Horlick miracles

The Film Department of J. Walter Thompson Ltd. has sponsored the first of a series of advertisement pictures for Horlick's Invincible Malted Milk. It is *On Parade*, a puppet film made by George Pal (his work in Holland for Phillip's Radio was reported in *W.F.N.'s* third issue), with amusing sound effects and music by Debroy Somers. The film was made in Pal's studio in Eindhoven, Holland, but the sound track and Gasparcolor process were added in England.

On Parade is a great step forward in Pal's work. There might be years separating *Ali Baba* and *On Parade* instead of only a few months. The use of colour is far more decisive (which would also indicate that Gasparcolor has progressed). The general speed of Pal's manipulation of puppets has increased and he has eliminated all unnecessary embellishments. This picture is bound to affect the attitude of the most average audience towards advertisement pictures, with the result that the scope for the production of such pictures will increase. The propaganda is never obtrusive, and the picture in itself is always entertaining although it never deviates from its line of advertisement. A regiment of soldiers are barracked in a fantastic castle, they are all lax, the bugler cannot blow, they would all like breakfast in bed; on parade they fall asleep, even the General's horse is yawning. The doctor is sent for and diagnoses them as suffering from night starvation. Horlick's must be the remedy. Horlick's is, and after six weeks every man is A1 instead of C3.

The most interesting advance in Pal's use of wooden puppets is that he has greatly improved their facial expression. Previously his figures had the character of toys. In *On Parade* one begins to see the possibility of developing a character which might become as famous as Felix or Mickey.

New film public acclaims sponsored pictures

THIS WINTER will show a vast development of film shows outside the theatres. The larger operators, having checked up on last winter's experiments with the educational groups and other social organisations, are likely to double their activity. An incentive to development is the new interest shown by the churches. A dominating factor is the tendency of lecture clubs to substitute film shows for personal discourse by itinerant lecturers.

It is reckoned that the number of lecture syllabuses in the country run to nearly a hundred thousand and that halls available or devoted to periodical group gatherings run well over the fifty thousand. The potential audience for films of educational or cultural programmes may be reckoned from these figures.

Add the halls of the churches to the halls of the social service societies, to the halls of the literary clubs, to the meeting places of the business groups and the youth groups and the women groups. Add together the anxious, earnest and interested little gatherings which, under the chairmanship of vicar, schoolmaster or local litterateur, ponder over every problem from art to archæology. The sum total would appear to run into millions.

This, at any rate, is the vista which the propagandists and educationists are now reaching for. Operators like the Post Office and Western Electric have a large number of units covering village halls on a one-night-stand basis. Alternatively they run seasons of films in central halls and gather their audiences from the societies by special invitation. Last winter, at a fair guess, an audience of seven millions was covered in this way.

It is not too early to suggest that there is not one cinema industry, but two: the industry of popular entertainment and the industry of popular education. The split is deep between the two, with little or no cross-reference.

The entertainment industry remains exclusively concerned with entertainment and profoundly ignorant of the new development. The non-theatrical field is developing its own specialised producers, its own machinery for exhibition, its own type of film and its own basis of finance.

That financial basis is largely a sponsored one. Publicity, propaganda and public relations finance, which in the U.S.A. runs to the sponsorship of radio programmes, finds no such outlet here. It is moving to film and the ready-made audiences of the non-theatrical halls.

Gas, electricity, posts, the B.B.C., chocolate, tea, milk, cars, travel, newspapers and Dominion Governments are finding the funds for the new cinema. Glass, steel, and money are tentative beginners, though there is some probability that steel and money will join gas, electricity, posts and travel as principal operators. The British Government represented now in posts and agriculture may be bound sooner or later to bring in health and labour.

Most spectacular of the developments in this field is the fact that sponsorship is for the most part on educational and not on entertainment lines. Certain attempts have been made to mix direct selling with a popular programme of entertainment films but the general impression formed is that standards of entertainment have been lower than those of the local cinemas, and therefore ineffective.

When sponsors have followed educational lines they have found themselves fulfilling a public want not now met by the theatrical people. Many are now scrambling to find an educational or social approach in the material they handle. Air, road and rail are sponsoring travel: gas is sponsoring diet and health; electricity is sponsoring housing; chocolate is dispensing geography and life on the farm. Posts have run up the banner of civics.

On this basis public relations officers are finding considerable exercise for their imaginations. The possibilities are clearly enormous. Still in the market for sponsorship are popular science, physical culture, mechanics and craftsmanship, personal hygiene, child welfare and a dozen other major fields of interest.

In the meantime a great new audience is being formed. It is in fact forming itself. It is not a rich audience though in five years it may be. But from the point of view of sponsors it already represents a golden field of opportunity. The more progressive among them are taking advantage of it, to the general benefit of education and the community.

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and contributions by

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● Not that it is heavily political, for variety is the key-note. The August issue includes four stories—among them Mobilisation Day by SILONE, author of Fontamara . . . four pages of cartoons in holiday mood . . . Best Left Books . . etc. . . 64 pages in all.

For teachers only

Teach from Living Facts

Civics is a means of relating the essentials of education to the constantly changing needs of the adult world. Its present status in the schools falls short of this, for the fallacy of educating for past needs still holds sway. So the teacher who wishes to push his teaching of history, biology and geography beyond the 1900 mark is being led into the Civics field in fetters. He is dinned with the word "Reconstruction" and told that he must make again a world in which the engineers, the technicians and the other employed workers can take their place, or, alternatively, he is bade keep them happy until this reconstruction has been made.

Isolated efforts to tackle the problem are indicative of a growing desire to organise the material of citizenship teaching. One limit characterises them all; they are founded on and bounded by the classroom technique. New material is taught with the old instruments—instruments which have produced the lag between the school world and the real world, and the resultant teaching is inept because the instruments of the classroom technique are not supple enough to be adapted to the rapidly and constantly changing content of the material of Civics. The present classroom method permits only of the teaching of the forms of the modern world and not the stuff that it is made of. It can teach political divisions from maps and books but it cannot teach the social process because it cannot teach from the living fact.

We need an elastic instrument which can not only transcribe life but can recreate life and interpret it for us—an implement supple enough to MOVE with the ever-changing social process.

Here is our need, and the social process is our material, but where is our instrument? This has been answered in some measure in the new documentary films and echoed a little in actuality broadcasting.

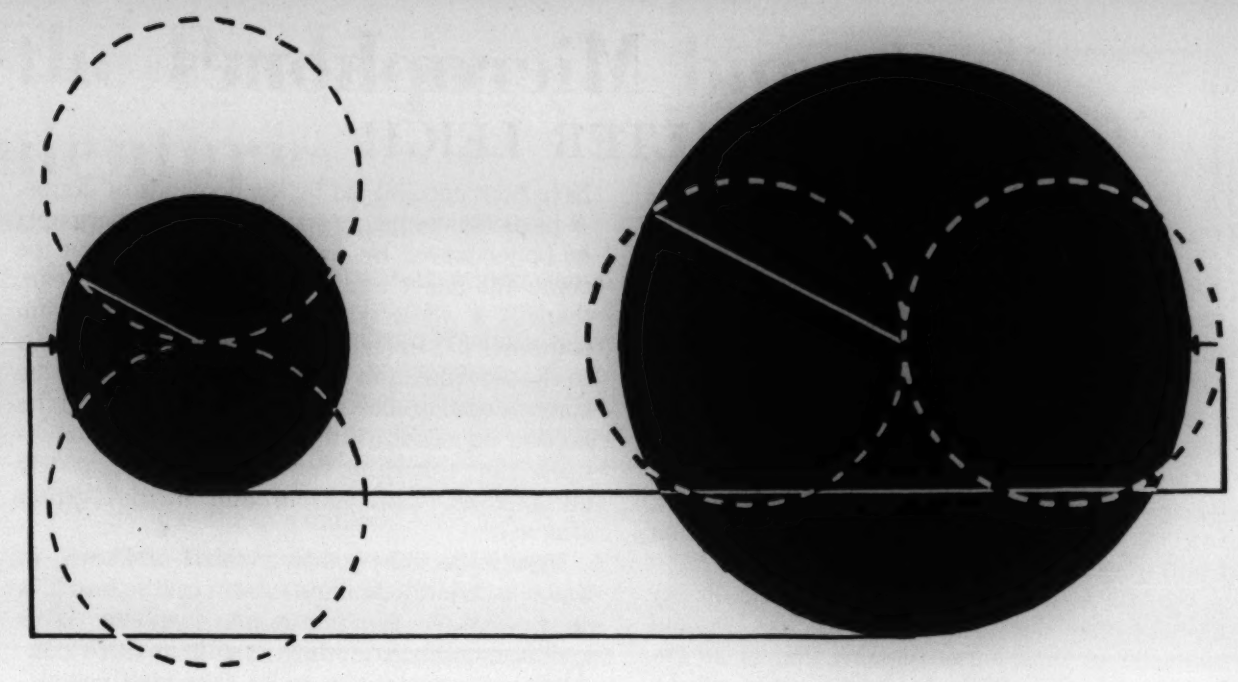
The documentary (or actuality) method is one to bring alive the real drama latent in everyday life. For the sociologist it is the means of bringing alive the people to the people. It has the advantage over the lecture system, or the classroom system, of providing not merely the best alternative to actual experience but something which is in itself a complete experience of actuality. It can give a new experience of life; if the experience is enhanced by art its material is the fact. In the material we have the living fact, the necessary condition of teaching Citizenship.

In film is that supple instrument which can not only transcribe and recreate the facts of the time but can interpret the spirit of the time. The discovery of printing by the scholar made classical education possible; the discovery of film by the teacher may yet make Civic education a reality. Film is the instrument with which we may bridge the gap between the technique of the classroom and the new demands of the contemporary essential.

The films are in existence. The need is there.

T. B.

This subject will be dealt with more fully in our forthcoming educational supplement.



Mathematics Comes to the Screen

$\ddot{x} + x = 0$

THE MATHEMATICAL FILM referred to in the last number of *W.F.N.* by Fairthorne and Salt, is finished.

To the unmathematical, without the help of teacher or blackboard (which are intended by the producers to supplement the film), the message it tells is not clear, but it is of importance to teachers of mathematics from the higher certificate grades and upwards. The producers are publishing a leaflet to accompany the film which is, of course, silent.

It puts Salt into the front rank of animators. The technical work of the moving diagrams is excellent. It is rivalled only by Three-Minute Films' film on the Sinusoidal Pendulum.

The film is full of interest even for the mathematically unenlightened. One can take it as straight abstract and even in this class it stands ahead of previous work. The reason is not far to seek. Ruttman's abstract films and films like them had an arbitrary rhythm of their own, imposed by the director according to his whim; the ordinary spectator could find no rhyme or reason for the changing shapes. Fischinger's films have a very definite rhythm, but a rhythm superimposed on them by the thythm of the musical accompaniment. They have no visual rhythm of their own. Without the music they are just a lot of rather incomprehensible sparks and lines and dashes.

Moholy Nagy tries to get rhythm into his abstracts by building a machine with certain arbitrary laws of movement of its own. His films have no relation to the outside world, though every now and then they tie up in a literary way with the world of machinery. (Legg used a portion of Moholy Nagy's film with success to open up his, *The Coming of the Dial.*)

Treated as an abstract Fairthorne's and Salt's film has movements determined by certain universal laws of mathematics. They have the precision and rates of change of the equations from which they are adapted.

It should be noted that differential equations are used to measure not amounts, but *rates of change*. And out of this fact springs the beautiful movement of the film—varied, harmonious, with an inner logical rhythm which has not yet been achieved by any other abstract director, because no abstract director has before built his films on the actual underlying rhythms of the world.

We quote below extracts from the leaflet published by Fairthorne, because by reading it one can gain some inkling of the attitude of the directors to their material.

THE EQUATION $\ddot{x} + x = 0$

Notation—Robert Fairthorne.

Animation—Brian Salt.

This film is to be regarded as a working model. It is, in fact, a set of moving diagrams rather than a complete film with definite beginning, middle and end. In order to avoid interference with the teacher's individual method and particular needs, it contains no explanatory subtitles.

The basic element of the diagram is a disc, of variable radius, rotating at constant speed. From the perimeter of this disc unrolls a string, whose length is therefore equal to the integral of the radius with respect to the time. The principle is the same as that of wheel and disc planimeter, of which the diagram is a simple form.

Two of these discs are shown. The radius of one represents the acceleration, so the length of string unrolled represents the velocity. This string determines the radius of a second disc, which is therefore proportional to the velocity. The string unrolled from the velocity disc represents the distance, and is arranged to determine the radius of the first acceleration disc so as to satisfy the equation. At all instants the radii of the two discs will satisfy the equation, so the motion of the diagram represents the solution.

The diagram and its motion make immediately evident:—

1. The meaning of the relations symbolised by the mathematical equation.
2. The symmetry of the relations. The velocity and the distance may be interchanged with only an alteration of phase.
3. The inevitability of periodic roots. If the second term had a negative coefficient, that is, if the discs turned in opposite directions, the discs would increase or decrease in size definitely. . . .

. . . Throughout the film a white disc represents a negative quantity, a black disc a positive.

Copies of this film, on 35 mm., 16 mm., or 9.5 mm. stock, can be obtained from—R. A. FAIRTHORNE, Kirk Michael, Hillfield Road, Farnborough, Hants.

A. E.

Music and Microphones

BY WALTER LEIGH

A FEW YEARS ago some experiments were made on the Continent with music specially written for broadcasting and gramophone-recording. Interesting results were obtained, which were however not taken up by the broadcasting and gramophone companies, and the idea of providing music adapted to the needs of domestic mechanical entertainments has been abandoned. Improvements in apparatus are eliminating problems of orchestration, and already any music, short of the largest choral and orchestral works, can be reasonably well reproduced on either radio or gramophone.

Nevertheless, however greatly the tone quality of mechanical music is improved, the essential character of such music remains that of an enlarged miniature. With the loud-speaker, all the sound proceeds from one small spot; in the concert-hall, the orchestra is spread over the platform, and the sound is heard in perspective. The confusion caused to the ear by the loud-speakers installed in some large theatres, when the actual sound from the stage is heard simultaneously with the amplified sound, illustrates this point.

In film music, experiments with the microphone have been encouraged by the demands of drama. A particular sequence in a film may conceivably be better served by, say, two performers on the comb-and-paper and a third on an old tin can, than by a whole symphony orchestra. The film composer has in fact an infinite variety of sounds to choose from, and need not be tied down to the conventional orchestra for his effects. Indeed, he need by no means use the same orchestra throughout a film: fragments can be recorded separately on different combinations and fitted together afterwards.

Experience shows that a small orchestra, in which each individual instrument can be heard, is more effective for film-music than the large symphony orchestra which is still so often considered necessary for a really expensive production. A huge climax with drums rolling, brass blaring and fiddles whizzing about in mad excitement, so thrilling in the concert hall, will as likely as not only come through as a nasty rasping noise in the cinema. Probably a single drum and a trumpet would be adequate to produce the same effect, in combination with the picture. For the excitement is in the picture: the music is not there to create it, merely to support it.

The question of what instruments are particularly suited to the microphone, and whether others should be eliminated, admits of no final decision. It is recognised that at present strings are less satisfactory in film-recording than wind instruments, though for broadcasting and the gramophone they are excellent. Trumpets similarly lose most of their brilliance through the loud-speaker. Drums suffer very badly, and the rhythm in ordinary dance-music is best left to the guitar and string-bass. Timpani must be used with care as they can easily confuse the ensemble. On the other hand, gongs, cymbals and bells can be used with great effect.

But beyond restricting the size of the orchestra there need be no particular limitations imposed on the film composer. Rather should he realise that the microphone brings many possibilities unknown to the concert hall. He may if he pleases, combine a trombone with a jew's-harp, or eighteen saxophones with a mouth-organ. Simplicity, clarity and economy are virtues in all music, but doubly so in film-music. The worst thing a film-composer can do is to overload the microphone. The familiar type of hack orchestration, with its "doubling-up" and "filling-in," is useless for the film. Film-music must be written specifically for performance through the microphone, with full regard to its various needs and possibilities. It is fairly safe to say that film-music which makes a good concert-suite will be bad film-music.

Nijinsky was film-minded

The almost hysterical enthusiasm of English audiences for ballet has this year reached unparalleled heights, infecting hitherto reliable critics with its indiscriminate inaccuracy and causing staid publishers to pour forth torrents of books all full of the same anecdotes.

This whole situation is rather like movie ballyhoo, and all that are needed now are a few Danilova, Lichine, and Nemtchinova fan clubs and a Louella Parsons to organise the gossip of the dance world.

In actual fact this year's season has done no more than to reiterate both the faults and excellencies of the de Basil company, and to introduce us to two new ballets by Fokine. These were *L'Epreuve d'Amour* which showed Fokine at his best and was distinguished by a glorious decor by Derain, and *Don Juan*, about which the less said the better. Fokine's company, under the ægis of Rene Blum, underlines once again the tendency to carelessness in corps de ballet and ensemble work which took place after Diaghilev's death, and from which the de Basil company is by no means free.

Turning to happier aspects, there is no doubt that there has seldom been a better set of individual dancers. Blum has Nemtchinova, Eglevsky and Kirsova and in the de Basil company are Danilova, Toumanova, Baranova, Verchinina, Guérard, Massine and Lichine—and, most superb of them all, Riabouchinska, who will soon be one of the greatest dancers of the age.

The most striking moment of the season was the reappearance of *L'Apres Midi d'un Faune* in the de Basil programme.

This twenty-five year old Nijinsky ballet has much in common with the technique of the most advanced sound films, in which visuals and sounds intrinsically different combine to give a unified impression. Debussy's music, acme of lush romanticism and exquisitely scored, is

played against the coldly classical movements of Grecian nymphs before a plain blue backcloth. The resemblance to film is intensified by the two-dimensional quality of the choreography, for the movements were developed by Nijinsky from a study of Greek friezes and vase paintings and are always directed across the stage, never backwards or forwards. The faun himself (very beautifully danced by Lichine) acts as a link between the two elements. His movements are also two-dimensional but there are frequent hints of a more earthy attitude towards sex than the strictness of the dancing would suggest.

It is a masterpiece which no film director should miss.

Film people might also agitate for a revival of *Apollo Musagetes* in which Balanchine reached similar ends by a quite different route.

CARLOS MARSDEN

Weill Scores Pirate Fantasy

From W.F.N.'s New York Correspondent

Kurt Weill, composer of *Mahagonny*, *Happy End*, and the German *Beggar's Opera*, is at present in New York completing the musical score for the film of *A High Wind in Jamaica*, by Richard Hughes.

Weill finds a strong appeal in Hughes' fantasy about a pirate vessel with a shipload of English children. The film is an independent, produced by John Krimsky, who earlier financed Dudley Murphy's *Emperor Jones*, and introduced *Mädchen in Uniform* to Broadway.

Weill's score is not continuous. He prefers, he says, to use song surreptitiously, as an invocation, something as beyond speech as poetry is beyond prose. None of his singers are principal characters in the story.

An ardent Disney fan, he believes that the Mickey films finally established the principle of film music, in which the composer must also be a dramatist, must evolve a give-and-take between score and script.

"I object to the Hollywood musicals," he adds. "They are still afraid of not explaining where the music comes from. Hence the Grace Moore–Lily Pons cycle. They have forgotten the strange, the mysterious, the voices that dictate to us in dreams —all the essentials of real romanticism."

Since the break-up of his partnership with Bert Brecht, Weill has been almost continuously in the States. He did the score for the ill-fated Werfel–Reinhardt production of *The Road to Promise*.

Future plans include the music for a new Jed Harris opera, based on *The Ugly Runts*. This is a verse drama for Robert Reynolds about Hungarian hunger strikers. He also plans a satirical comedy for the Group Theatre.

Personality–the Problem of Commentary

By a well-known newsreel commentator

The best man to speak a commentary is not invariably the best man to write it—but the writer's style must match exactly the vocal personality of the speaker. Vocal personality of *Universal Talking News* Jeffrey is deliberate, solid British—of *Gaumont British's* Emmott, fast, sophisticated. Each is brilliant in his own style, each writes his own script—but even better scripts might be written for them by a specialist, working in the individual style of each. The problems of speaking and writing must be dealt with separately.

In speaking commentaries the secret of real success is to create a personality. Adopt a particular style suited to the voice, stick to it, without trying to be six different commentators rolled into one. No single voice can be both *Pathé Gazette's* de Groot, heavy, rolling, dramatic—and *Gaumont British's* Emmott, light, witty, tongue-in-cheek. Hence the prime argument for two or three commentators per reel, each voice associated with a particular type of story. Both *Movietone* and *Paramount* use this multi-commentator technique, but where they fail is that their voices are too much alike, are not used with any definite story-voice coupling, are hardly recognisable individually by the average cinema audience. Where *Gaumont British*, *Universal*, *Pathé Gazette*—all using single commentators—fail, is that none of their voices can cover the full range of News Organ Stops—from "wreck of R 101" bass, to "Boo Boo's tea party" piccolo. Correct technique is found in U.S. newsreels, where voice-subject personality is fully exploited. Examples—*Movietone's* Lew Lehr (comedy), Louise Vance (fashions)—*Pathé News'* Bob Bartlett (travel), Clem McCarthy (sport), and many another.

The biggest mistake of most British editors is in thinking that the commentary can be written after the picture is cut. It cannot—and in practice never is. When the editor discusses with the production manager and cameramen—days beforehand—the shots that are to be covered on the story, subconsciously the commentary is already being written. When the cameramen have unloaded, the negative has been viewed, the cutter instructed, the plan is complete. All that is left to the writer is to interpret the plan in words. Even the form of his sentences is dictated by the sequence of shots. For a real union between words and picture, this second-hand process is unworkable. Either the editor must finish the job, dictate the commentary, or the writer must control the final make up of the picture sequence, leaving only the general advance planning to the editor. One man to control make up, write, and speak, is possible in theory, but one in a million.

Another fallacy among British editors is thinking that the commentary can "carry", when really it can only "add to", the picture. At a rough estimate, the average cinema audience gives 70 per cent. of its attention to the picture, only 30 per cent. to the spoken word. Hence the commentary must follow the picture within narrow limits, not, as consistently happens, lead away, in misguided efforts to add information, atmosphere, humour. Recent example—when the zeppelin "Hindenburg" first came into the Reels, cameramen were not allowed aboard—British newsreels tried to cover this picture-weakness by letting commentators describe scenes aboard, control cabin, engines, over-shots of "Hindenburg" in the air—ineffective, because the cinema audience's attention was divided. U.S. Reels achieved the same object by using animated diagrams of the airship's interior, while commentators gave facts.

In its right place, commentary can add interest to even the best news-picture, but it cannot be used as a continuous accompaniment. Actions that are obvious from the picture need no description. Phrases—only too often heard—like, "the crowd rushed up the steps", or, "the Prime Minister laughed heartily", are ludicrous. Some editors compromise by maintaining that commentary should cover sections where sound is uninteresting. They should learn that music is a far better medium than speech, for covering the mere weaknesses of a sound track.

Almost all the commentary faults of British newsreels are due to one factor. Subconsciously most editors are still living in the trackless desert of the silent days. In their mirage, they still see picture first, commentary, sound, and music as added after-effects. Of the four equal partners of the modern cinema, one is still their pampered favourite.

NEWSREEL CLIPS

By an agreement signed between American distributors and French Gaumont, 150 American cinemas already specialising in foreign features will exhibit the first All-foreign Newsreel.

The Reel is that sponsored by the Havas News Agency.

* * *

Most dramatic Newsreel item of last month was picture of Haile Selassie addressing League conclave at Geneva. While camera rested on the Emperor, sound-men recorded storm of whistling and cat-calling from group of angry Italians.

Paramount struck a commendable note of impartiality in its handling of the Palestine crisis. Brief interviews with both Jewish and Arab leaders were included in a somewhat extensive treatment of the situation.

* * *

Credit to cameraman, Al Brick, for beautifully shot sequence of American aeroplanes manœuvring in and above clouds, included in Movietone News.

* * *

A new entrant into the Newsreel business is *Scottish News Magazine*, an independent reel sponsored by Scottish Film Productions (Ltd.). The producers, Stanley Russell and Malcolm Irvine, hope to gain sufficient support to issue the reel once every month.

GEORGE NOBLE

(No. 2 of Cameramen Series)

Delivered 34 years ago, George Noble, maestro of the documentary photography world, began his film career as assistant to Frank Grainger on a two-reel bathing belle comedy. For three weeks he was turned off Southend Beach daily. His moment came when he "doubled" for the hero and was thrown off Southend Pier only to land in three foot of water backside up.

1919 saw Noble as camera assistant to Ernest (*Chang*) Schoedsack shooting for Selznig News. Schoedsack asked George to go East on *Chang*. "Animal pictures," said George, "are suicide for the cameraman."

With elder brother Joe, he went newsreel and worked on *Daily Cinema News*, owned by Archie Mitchell, the first and only newsreel to issue daily. George and Joe were financed by Simon Rowson and Jerry Jackson to make twelve cartoons of Tom Webster drawings. More cartoons followed. *Dismal Desmond* was made for Pathé and *Sammy and His Sausage* for British Talking Pictures. These were succeeded by work on feature pictures for such veterans as Thomas Bentley, Graham Cutts, Harry B. Parkinson and George Samuelson.

Advertising then caught the Noble instinct, still coupled with a flair for cartoons. *Mr. York of York*, *Yorks*, for Rowntrees, was the first advertising talking cartoon. George and Joe also claim the credit (nobody else does) for first taking a piano and jazz band up into the air and recording over London. Still pioneering, George strayed into the E.M.B. Film Unit one day in 1932 and was taken on for half a day's shooting on a Poster Film. He stayed three years. He shot on Elton's *Voice of the World* and *Aero Engine*, Spice's *Weather Forecast*, Taylor's *So This is Lancashire*, Alex Shaw's Orient Cruise Films, and Legg's *B.B.C.: The Voice of Britain*.

Since then he has kept close to documentary. He turned with Taylor on *Citizens of the Future* and remained with Strand Films to shoot Anstey's *On the Way to Work*, Shaw's *Preface to Life*, is now working on Holmes's *The Way to the Sea*, and will go East with Shaw in the autumn on a new programme of films for Imperial Airways.

Asked what is his hobby, Noble will say: "Five-finger exercises on Wanstead Flats or trap-drum playing." In point of fact, he can drive a harder bargain than anyone else for a secondhand car.

Pola-Screen may aid Cartoonists

KODAK HAVE NOW on the market for the first time screens for polarising light. Invented by Edwin H. Land they are of two kinds. One for fitting on the camera, the other to fit the light source. Light travels in all directions. The screen polarises the light and sends it in one direction. The material for doing this consists of minute rod-like crystals running parallel to each other and is cemented between two sheets of glass. The screen is mounted in a holder with a handle. The light passes through the rod-like crystals. Each one acts as an optical slit. When you turn the handle the screen rotates and with it the direction of the light.

Here is a list of what the Pola-screen will do when used only on the camera:—

1. It controls contrast in subject (hot spots, etc.). This only works at certain angles but the range seems wide enough for practical use. If, for instance, you are working at an aerodrome and your camera is at an angle of 32 degrees to the subject, you will possibly pick up a glare from the white concrete. Put on the Pola-screen and the glare is gone.

2. It photographs through glass or water at angles varying between 32 and 37 degrees. The Pola-screen cuts out surface reflection so that you photograph straight through glass or straight down through the water. If you want increased reflection turn your Pola-screen the opposite way.

3. It subdues oblique reflection to show surface texture.

4. It acts as a variable depth sky filter and does not affect the monochrome rendering of other subjects (a filter does). The tone can be regulated by turning the Pola-screen. ("Faces, blossoms, trees, mountains, etc., can be made to stand out in a very beautiful manner against the sky," say Kodak.)

5. Two Pola-screens together act as a variable neutral density filter.

a. Two Pola-screens in front of lens with handles together are equal to a light grey neutral density filter, transmitting ·32 per cent. of the light.

b. Two Pola-screens with handles at right-angles are equal to a dark neutral grey filter, transmitting .16 per cent. of the light: with, of course, density variations between ·16 and ·32 per cent.

6. The Pola-screen absorbs ultra-violet rays and transmits the infra-red rays freely without polarisation.

7. When using a Pola-screen exact results are seen on the ground glass.

The main drawback is that it needs a four times increase in exposure.

These points are for the Pola-screen on camera alone. For normal work a Pola-screen on camera and lights does not seem to be practical. Apart from the expense, 16 times more exposure is needed. They could, however, be very useful for trick, model and cartoon work.

Jack Okey compares Denham with Hollywood

I recently had a talk with Mr. Jack Okey on Denham and how it compares with Hollywood from the Studio Designer's point of view. Mr. Okey explained that in the first place our inimitable fogs lead to a necessity for air-conditioning plant on an impressive scale, while the risk of a drenching which is run by those who walk even the shortest distance out-of-doors in this country during the season of great rains (i.e. all the year round) has called for the construction of covered passage-ways where open alleys would have sufficed in any reasonable climate. Mr. Okey referred to Denham rather as the explorer might speak of some remote uncharted native settlement. He was full of praise for the unspoilt beauty of its scenery. Nevertheless it was clear he hankered somewhat after the amenities of California—a land flowing, it appears, with main's water and cheap electricity. In default of all this he has had to install at Denham a 4½ million watt power station and a pumping station capable of delivering 1½ million gallons of water every 12 hours, to say nothing of a private sewage disposal plant.

Vast though the Denham Studios appear to us it has to be borne in mind that they are easily outstripped in size by any one of Hollywood's giants, such as M.G.M., Warner or Paramount.

It had originally been intended to build the new Technicolour processing laboratories as part of the Denham Studio lay-out, but owing to curious tribal taboos which find expression in the local building regulations it was not possible to make use of the only available site which was situated partly in Middlesex and partly in Buckinghamshire. So the laboratories are to be put up on the Great West Road.

H. D. WALEY

Cine Film on 'Phone

There will be no more high-pitched buzz-buzz-buzz-buzz noises (number engaged); no more continuous high-pitched buzzes (number unobtainable—he's been cut off because he can't pay his bill) if present G.P.O. plans mature.

An ingenious machine has been designed by the G.P.O. engineers which carries a strip of cine film. When the number is engaged or unobtainable, the film is made to pass in front of a photo-electric cell and the person on the line hears the Girl with the Golden Voice say what is the matter. The voice repeats the remark a few times.

The film is a continuous strip mounted on the rim of a turntable. All the necessary remarks are on it, and those required are picked up automatically.

Treasure Trove of Wardour St.

A YOUNG MAN equipped with camera and reflectors visited a barn near Dartford one day. For a long time the barn owner watched filming operations with interest, and finally he said: "I believe there's some kind of picture rubbish hidden hereabouts; I dunno what to do with it, perhaps you'd like to have it."

He grubbed about in a dark corner, and out of a wooden chest produced shots of Queen Victoria's Jubilee and the Coronation of King Edward the Seventh. The young man promptly bought it from the farmer, and that is how Norman's stock-shots Library was started.

All topical stuff has a historical and documentary value, Mr. Norman knows, and he makes it his business to collect records of public happenings, which he keeps and tabulates carefully for the use of ourselves and posterity. For instance, he was able to supply unique material for the 1935 Jubilee film.

From three or four tins of negative, the Library has grown into one of the largest independent in the world, being at present stocked with 15 million feet of film, to the 20 million of its American equivalent. It is the only independent stock-shot Library in England, and supplies and distributes for many big companies. Despatching is also a special feature of the organisation, and was started in 1911.

The vaults are indexed alphabetically—tins crawl to the roof labelled Ants, Aunts, Athletes, Annam, Assam, Aeroplanes, Aspidistras, etc., etc. Some of the juxtapositions are odd, to say the least of it. Mussolini rests on Medicine, for instance; and Ethiopia on top of Eden. There is also a library of sound track.

Mr. Norman has been a pioneer in other directions too. He was the first man to arrange film shows in hotels and restaurants of the day's big event—the Derby, the National, the Boat Race: that was about ten years ago. These shows proved extremely popular. It was quite the smart thing to do, either if you had *not* been present, or *had*, and could therefore superiorly comment on the incidents of the race, to see the film of it in the evening.

He also showed the first film ever seen in Court. The subject was . . . prams . . . an advertising film made by Cinads, Ltd., who were being sued for breach of contract. One wonders whether the learned judge was a wit or a married man.

Many *de luxe* trains are fitted up nowadays with cinema shows. The first time this was done was by Mr. Norman on the famous "Bussey Express" which in 1929 ran from Glenboig, Scotland, to Euston, after the opening of the Bussey Coal Distillation Plant. An eye-witness writes: ". . . after that we had seventy miles of speeches . . . Lord Elmley talked for about thirty miles . . . the Chairman, Mr. Powell, spoke another thirty miles, and one or two other speakers, including Sir Arbuthnot Lane and Mr. G. Lloyd George, M.P., got about five miles apiece; after which the guests betook themselves to the two kinema theatres—showing pictures from 2.45 onwards." *How* grateful they must have been for the silence and darkness of the said "kinemas"!

W. H.

How to Found a Film Society

BY NORMAN WILSON

NO FILM SOCIETY is the branch of a central organisation. The vigour of the movement is largely due to the fact that each society is an independent unit, spontaneous in growth, expressing the characteristics and outlook of its locality. There can be little doubt that a national organisation with a paid organiser going round the country could soon establish branches for the showing of films in every populous centre in Britain, with councils ornate with the names of local dignitaries. But such groups would lack the vitality and conviction of self-constituted bodies created by desire of the community itself.

Gratifying as the growth of the movement has been it would have been greater still if many of the people who wish to see experimental, documentary and continental films had known how to go about forming a local film society.

The procedure is comparatively simple.

First of all you must get together a small committee of people sufficiently interested in the idea to assist in launching the society. If you do not know any personally a letter to the local press advocating the formation of a film society will put you in touch with other enthusiasts.

The first task of your committee will be to approach the magistrates and ask if they would permit a society, properly constituted, to hold private film performances on a Sunday. Even if this is refused it would still be possible to run a society with week-night performances—as Manchester, Wolverhampton and Inverness have shown. Before approaching the authorities it would be as well to enlist the support of as many influential citizens as possible, so that your unusual demands are not looked upon with too great askance. Quote the examples of Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Southampton, Leicester, Newcastle, etc.

You will want to know something about financial responsibilities. These consist of two main items—the hire of a cinema and the rental of films. Allowing as a maximum £10–£12 for the theatre and £12–£15 for films (many societies are run much more economically than this) you can count on an average expenditure of £25 per show at the highest. It is simple arithmetic to calculate the subscription you wish to charge, the number of shows you want to give and the number of members you must obtain to ensure solvency.

Having decided to risk finding sufficient people in the district interested enough in good films to join the society, the next task is to launch the venture with as much publicity as possible. Enlist the support of the film critics on the local newspapers. Obtain the co-operation of whatever other intellectual bodies there are in the town—literary societies, language circles, study groups, etc. Hold a public meeting or, better still, give a free film show as a sample of the type of performance your society intends to present. (A number of excellent free films are available for this purpose.) If possible invite a well-known film personality to address the meeting. Whatever you do don't get the mayor or the provost, the Bishop, or your local M.P., unless, by some unusual chance, he has expert knowledge of films. Do not forget to make application to the Inland Revenue for exemption from Entertainment Tax.

If you want help or information write to the Secretary of the Federation of British Film Societies, 56 Manchester Street, London, W.1, or to the Secretary of the Federation of Scottish Film Societies, Mr. Forsyth Hardy, 54 Bruntsfield Gardens, Edinburgh, 12. *W.F.N.* is always glad to help.

A FREE FORUM

World Film News is the official organ of the Federation of Film Societies. In the coming months of film society activity it will devote more of its space to the problems of the societies and to the various services of information which the societies need.

We shall do so because we believe the film societies have been a power for good. They have created the reputations of directors and have given critics the only grounding they know. They have created a body of opinion for good films throughout the country which has affected production policy and may yet affect the entertainment policy of popular exhibitors. They have created all the standards on which films are discussed to-day, and by their study and enthusiasm they will create the standards of to-morrow.

Our pages are therefore gladly laid open to the film societies and their members. They may discuss what they please from any and every angle. We ourselves have no editorial policy which we wish to urge save one: *Federate—at every sacrifice of local independence, Federate; and when you have created a central discipline in your federation see that the discipline is maintained.* Together you have great power; and you need all of it if you are to sup, as you must, with the devil.

But it is a free forum, and even the anarchists may have their say.

Many important towns already have flourishing societies. But there are dozens of others where no effort has yet been made to screen intelligent films. What, for instance, is wrong with Bath, Carlisle, Hull, Middlesborough, Nottingham, Sheffield, Worcester, York?—with Dunfermline, Dumfries, Perth and Stirling?

Even in smaller centres where it is not possible to form the more ambitious type of exhibiting society small film-study circles can be formed. Many first-rate documentary films are available on sub-standard stock, silent and sound. Numerous classic silent films, including most of the famous Russian productions, are also available on 16 mm. or 9.5 mm. Performances of these films, which are free from most magisterial regulations, could be given for a few pounds. With some persuasion and organised support the local cinema can often be induced to book some unusual shorts or one of the more worthwhile commercial features not likely to be shown in the ordinary course. The larger film societies have already shown how their influence can improve the taste of audiences; a network of such groups throughout the country might create a revolution in production, assuring producers of "minority" films the support of an immense new organised public.

NEW PORTSMOUTH SOCIETY

The trade is taking a keen interest in the formation of the Portsmouth Film Society, the chairman of which is Councillor F. J. Spickernell, delegate to the General Council of the C.E.A. C. Paice, of the Palace Theatre, is in charge of publicity.

At the inaugural meeting Councillor Spickernell stated that the aim of the Society is to show to its members those films which, although excellent in production, and often of foreign origin, it is not possible to show commercially in the city.

FILM SOCIETY FOR BRADFORD

Bradford Civic Playhouse, rebuilt after a disastrous fire, is to be equipped for talkies, so that films can be shown at any time when plays are not being staged. The new theatre seats 350 people.

As a result it is intended to form a film society to present shows on Sunday evenings. Programmes will include foreign films, documentaries and educational pictures.

Under discussion also is the formation of a production unit for the making of films in which the amateur actors connected with the Playhouse will take parts.

WOLVERHAMPTON

A decided preference for Russian films was indicated by members of the Wolverhampton Film Society which took a ballot at the end of its first season.

The list of feature films submitted to members included 14 Russian, 14 French, 11 American, 10 German and 4 British. Of the 24 films most in demand 7 were Russian, 4 French, 4 German, 3 British and 3 American.

The first ten films were *Don Quixote*, *Everest*, *Thunder Over Mexico*, *Pitz Palu*, *Potemkin*, *Berkeley Square*, *Charlemagne*, *Poil de Carotte*, *Turksib* and *The Blue Light*. Other Russian films in the first 24 were *Earth*, *Mother*, *The Blue Express* and *New Babylon*.

Preference in shorts was for documentaries, with travel and natural history equal second, and cartoons last. Strong complaint was made against Vigo's *Zero de Conduite* by some members.

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SAYINGS OF THE MONTH

"I would be the happiest man in the world if there were many well-skilled scenarists available. I would have to do nothing but read what they had written, sit in my chair, smoke my cigar and be delighted. Things have not reached this state yet."—*Lajos Biro.*

* * *

"Acting is bunk."—*Gregory La Cava.*

* * *

"If I thought I could be good in pictures I would like to do it."—*Lady Warwick.*

* * *

"Folks figured that if there wasn't any 'goo goo' the kids would be disappointed. But 'goo goo' is in retirement now."—*Joe Penner.*

TELEOPTICON

(*an invocation*)

Dedicate to the Mifses J———B——— and E——— C———

Announcer Hoftefses! Co-axial Twins
Of *Televifion*, not the Children's Hour,
Reveal at laſt your aerial Origins,
And lead to *Alexandra's* leafy Bower
Wherein your *Myfteries* ye celebrate
And with the *Nobleft*, e'en with *Gerald Cock*
In ſecret make-up Teſts confabulate,
And chooſe, each one, a *Telegenic* Frock.

Say first, what *Programmes*, what *Variety Shows*
Ye will indite upon th'ethereal Screen.
And ſay, will Lecturers *blofsom* as the Roſe
With ravag'd Features hitherto unſeen?
Reveal! Reveal! We pant, we gaſp for *News*
And *Expectation* ſwells our hopeful Hearts
Alas! Unſatiſfied! Do ye refuſe?
The Hungry *Prefsman* unappeaſed departs
The *Telephone* implores, the *Wires* vibrate,
But ſtill great *Cock*, inexorably mute
In *virgin* Silence all immaculate
Harveſts in *fecret* his myſterious Fruit.

Sometimes a ſlender, fragmentary *Clue*
The Oracle vouchſafes. The *Headlines* ſcream.
"The *Televifion Girls* make up in *Blue*
"And daub their Roſy *Cheeks* with *Yellow* Cream."
Then Silence. In the ſtill *North London* air
The *Alexandrine* Aerial points to Heaven.
Will ye not ſpeak, divine and lovely *Pair*,
With liquid Voice official Silence leaven,
And reaſsure a *World* with waiting weary
That *Televifion* is not wholly dreary?

POTTED HISTORY CORNER

KOSHER HITLER, AMOS 'N' ANDY MUSSOLINI ACCENTS IRK CONSULS.

(*Headline in VARIETY*)

VIOLENT CONTRAST BETWEEN BRITISH AND AMERICAN PRODUCTION METHODS.

Rembrandt (Publicity Sheet).

"Gertrude Lawrence, who plays the part of housekeeper to Rembrandt, sings an old Dutch song called 'The Naughty Girls of Kieldrecht' whilst preparing the banquet in honour of the public showing of Rembrandt's famous picture *The Night Watch*. . . . In a tavern at Leyden singing and dancing will be shown to old 17th-Century folk songs and accompanied by genuine instruments of the period such as Rommelpot, Serpent, Bagpipes and Clarinet."

Romeo and Juliet (Publicity Sheet).

"Gorgeous tapestries, richly carved furniture, rich costumes, jewels flashing in the light of torches, musicians playing old dance tunes on instruments of the period."

This month's aureole of birdseed, with double-bar, goes to Major Harding-Cox, dog-lover of the Board of Film Censors, for the following pronunciamento:

"The Mongrel has no right to be born. He is an offence to public decency."

★

MONTHLY COMPETITION

No. 1.

It is reported from Hollywood that a new film, starring Freddie Bartholomew, Jackie Cooper and Mickey Rooney, is to be called *The Devil is a Sissy*.

W.F.N. offers a prize of one guinea and a second prize of half a guinea for an extract from a new section to be inserted by Milton in *Paradise Lost* to meet the circumstances. Entries should not exceed forty lines.

RULES AND CONDITIONS.

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the problem in the top left hand corner, and should be addressed to **Competitions, World Film News, Oxford House, Oxford Street, W.1.** Solutions must arrive by the first post on Friday, August 14th.
2. Competitiors may use a pseudonym.
3. The Editors' decision is final. They reserve the right to print the whole or part of any entry sent in. MSS. cannot be returned. If no entries reach the required standard no prize will be given.

★

Horrible revelations from West Regional B.B.C.

Reported in *News Chronicle*.

"The Regional Director has not yet arrived; he lives in Cardiff.

"The Programme Director is in Jerusalem, running Palestine's broadcasting.

"The Music Director is on long leave."

A Quiet Day at the Alexandra Palace

Copyright by Vicky Publications.

"WHAT LUCK WE CAN'T BE TELEVISED YET!"

LORUM

WISECRACKS AND CROSSTALK

Culled from the Report of the Select Committee on Cinematograph Films, Vol. 1.

Trenchant statement by Mr. Fligelstone (Chairman of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association):

"There appears to be a misguided opinion about this industry that there is a wish on the part of the producers to make greater and better films."

* * *

Mr. Fligelstone elucidates further :—

"A man comes along to a town or a man is in a town, but he does not make a public issue if that is what you mean. Do you mean public issue?"

* * *

Socratic dialogue

Dr. Mallon. "Is there any other industry where the words 'gentleman's agreement' are applied to an agreement to evade the law?"
Mr. Kearney. "We always refer to it in inverted commas."
Dr. Mallon. "Inverted gentlemen?"
Mr. Baker. "We do have gentlemen's agreements in this country, because it is the habit in all industries to trust one another, and we call them 'gentlemen's agreements.' "

* * *

Cri de cœur **from the Associated Cine-Technicians.**
Mr. Cameron. "You suggest that should be made illegal?"
Mr. Dickinson. "Oh, please, that is a very hard thing."
Mr. Cameron. "You suggest that should be made illegal?"
Mr. Dickinson. "How, we do not know."

* * *

Mr. Fligelstone has another fling:—

Lord Moyne. "You say public opinion in certain areas is resentful of the increasing number of British films. Is that because they are bad?"
Mr. Fligelstone. "No, it is one of those things that I cannot explain to you in this regard. Some people like spinach and others do not."

* * *

SUPER CROSSTALK

Cue for Song and Dance

Lord Moyne. "Would it be practicable?"
Mr. Baker. "Well, it would be difficult to find the offenders."
Mr. Korda. "It would be practicable."
Mr. Baker. "It would be practicable to do it."
Mr. Korda. "It could be done."

* * *

FRAGRANT FRAGMENT

"Between two and three thousand 'Tommies' are going into action for Gaumont-British next week. The Royal Artillery and the Engineers will be there and the latter will show their strength by building one bridge and blowing up another. Every phase of the infantry and mechanised army will be pictured in this great screen war, which will be fought, till the cameras run dry, near Stonehenge, with Amesbury as headquarters."

Oh God! Oh Mustard Gas!

DAVE ROBSON Says:—

"Whilst on a recent tour of China, I visited a village on the outskirts of Canton called Wangsee. Here I was amazed, on passing a dusty-looking cinema, to note that the feature-film billed was none other than Len Lye's *Colour Box*.

"Knowing of the controversy that has centred around this film wherever it has been shown, and of the varying interpretations placed on its conception which differ so widely, thought I, 'Here I may find the real solution'—and, believe me, I did!

"The film had just started as I entered, and inside I found a large audience gesticulating madly amid a hubbub of high-pitched, excited voices apparently expostulating their theories.

"Presently, someone in the audience shouted, 'Yen hackee sen wasee?' Then an amazing spectacle followed. Spontaneously, they all raised on their seats and inverted their trunks so that they took up positions standing on their heads, viewing the screen upside down! For a moment only was there silence, for almost immediately they burst fervently into a chant set to the rhythm of the music, terminating in a gusto of cheering and hand-clapping as the final cymbal-crash concluded the picture.

"So thunderstruck was I at this strange demonstration of approval, that I sought the interpretation from the resident American cinema manager.

"Apparently, viewed upside down, the pulsating colour-streaks represented to the Chinese an ancient psalm of their forefathers—appearing to them in the form of Chinese figure-writing so well understood by them."

Witness-eye view of the Select Committee on Cinematograph films.

TECHNICOLOUR DIETRICH

Says Richard Haestier in *The Star:* "Her pallid features, like alabaster, accentuated by scarlet lips, were perfectly moulded, but her expression was completely colourless."

(*Interruption.* "*Mummy, what is alabaster?*"—"*Sh! dear, it's the only thing Garbo hasn't got.*")

"Her blue eyes, either half closed or partly hidden by long curling artificial eyelashes, seemed visionless, suggesting that the mind behind was looking at some far off thing which the eye could not see."

(*Inspiration.* "*An eyeballful of flashes*
"*Obscures each star's horizon.*
"*Marlene alone relies on*
"*Her artificial lashes,*
"*Neath which, with happy inconsistence,*
"*Her eyes can gaze for any distance,*
"*Or still receive the brainpan's thanks*
"*By regist'ring continual blanks.*")

"Yet—and here, I believe, is the centre of her secret—she smoulders deeply within herself, but carefully preserves a veneer that is no deeper than porcelain enamel."

(*Intermission.* "*Bring me my Ming mask, Celestine, I wish to give someone the cold smoulder.*")

"She is, I think, still pale blue, mentally."

(*Inhibition.* "*My dear, I can't possibly wear that hat again, it clashes so dreadfully with me when I think of Clark Gable.*")

* * *

HINTS TO SCENARISTS

One day in Hollywood they were adapting a famous book for the screen (curious things like that are always happening out there). The supervisor was fighting like a madman for a certain line of dialogue. After several gory hours they said, "No, it comes out."

The supervisor wept. "It's the last line left from the book," he sobbed, " and I do feel kinda sentimental about it."

* * *

HORRID WARNING

"If Shirley Temple's mother had not taken her precious infant to see a movie one afternoon, little Shirley would not have been seen by the casting executive of ' Baby Burlesks,' who said at sight of the golden-haired moppet, ' I want that kid in the picture.' "

Mothers! take your children to the Zoo.

* * *

MORGUE NEWS

"Films die in a physical sense. They also shrink. They also decompose."

Lord Castlerosse.

Shrinkage of course takes place in the Box Office while decomposition sets in in the Script department.

* * *

TAILPIECE

Marion Davies' beach hut at Hollywood has twenty-four bedrooms. "*Some people like spinach and some do not.*" *As Mr. Fligelstone has already remarked on this page.*

FILM GUIDE

This guide publishes for each month the playing dates of selected films in central districts of London and the larger provincial towns. Readers will appreciate that this service is not an easy one to maintain. The indifference of some film companies to specialised films prevents this service from being as comprehensive and accurate as we would wish.

SHORTS

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gasparcolour)
PRODUCTION: Slatinay, George Pal. DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
LONDON: Curzon, Curzon Street — Aug. 3–16
Tatler, Charing Cross Road — Aug. 24–30
BRISTOL: Triangle — Aug. 3–8
CARDIFF: Pavilion — Aug. 17–22
Queen's — Aug. 17–22

'Alt! Oo Goes Theer? (Dunning Colour Cartoon)
DRAWN BY: Anson Dyer. DISTRIBUTION: Reunion.
BRISTOL: Regent — Aug. 31–Sept. 6
CARDIFF: Empire — Aug. 10–16

Audioscopiks
MANCHESTER: Tatler — Aug. 3–9

Carmen (Dunning Colour Cartoon)
DIRECTION: Anson Dyer. DISTRIBUTION: Reunion.
LONDON: Monseigneur, Strand — Aug. 10–12
Monseigneur, Piccadilly — Aug. 10–12
Piccadilly News, Gt. Windmill Street — Aug. 10–13
Sphere News, Tottenham Court Road — Aug. 10–12
Strand News, Agar Street — Aug. 10–12

Citizens of the Future
DIRECTION: Donald Taylor. PRODUCTION: Strand Films & G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Monseigneur, Piccadilly — Aug. 10–12
Strand News, Agar Street — Aug. 17–19
Everyman, Hampstead — Aug. 24–30
GLASGOW: Cambridge — Aug. 20–22
Astoria — Aug. 20–22
The new education, from Infant to Senior Schools.

Dragon of Wales
DIRECTION: W. B. Pollard. DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
LONDON: Sphere News — Aug. 10–12
LIVERPOOL: Smithdown Picture Playhouse — Aug. 10–12
GLASGOW: Bank, Clydebank — Aug. 17–19
A travelogue which attempts to tackle economic conditions.

Face of Britain
DIRECTION: Paul Rotha. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Strand News, Agar Street — Aug. 10–12
Everyman, Hampstead — Aug. 17–23
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur — Aug. 10–12
Hydro-electric power supersedes coal, and the face of Britain can once again be clean.

Gentlemen in Top Hats and Gentlemen in Crowns
PRODUCTION: A B. Svensk Filmindustri. ENGLISH PREPARATION: Donald Taylor. DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
LONDON: Piccadilly News, Gt. Windmill Street — Aug. 3–9
Studio Two, Oxford Street — Aug. 3–5
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont Palace — Aug. 13–15
Regent, Crosby — Aug. 27–29
Astoria, Walton — Aug. 27–29
New Coliseum — Aug. 31–Sept. 2
A retrospect of European events for the last 40 years, including very early newsreel work.

SHORTS

Great Cargoes
DIRECTION: Paul Rotha. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Strand News, Agar Street — Aug. 31–Sept. 2
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur — Aug. 17–19

March of Time
PRODUCTION: Editors of "Time." DISTRIBUTION: Radio.
Dynamic Journalism.
LONDON: No. 1 Tussauds, Baker Street — Aug. 10–16
Tatler, Charing Cross Road — Aug. 10–16
Monseigneur, Piccadilly — Aug. 31–Sept. 2
No. 2 Plaza, Regent Street — Aug. 24–30
Paramount, Tottenham Court Road — Aug. 24–30
BIRMINGHAM: No. 2 Futurist — Aug. 23–29
BRISTOL: No. 2 King's — Aug. 24–29
Whiteladies — Aug. 24–29
EDINBURGH: No. 1 Synod Hall — Aug. 3–8
GLASGOW: No. 2 Paramount — Aug. 24–29
LEEDS: No. 2 Paramount — Aug. 24–29
LEICESTER: No. 1 Palace — Aug. 24–29
LIVERPOOL: No. 2 Paramount — Aug. 24–29
MANCHESTER: No. 2 Paramount — Aug. 24–29
NEWCASTLE: No. 2 Paramount — Aug. 24–29

Progress
PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Strand News, Agar Street — Aug. 25–26
Everyman, Hampstead — Aug. 31–Sept. 6
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur — Aug. 13–15
The development of communications made in co-operation with the National Physical Laboratory.

Sam and His Musket (Dunning Colour Cartoon)
DRAWN BY: Anson Dyer. DISTRIBUTION: Reunion.
LONDON: Monseigneur, Piccadilly — Aug. 6–8

"Secrets of Life" Series
EDITING: Mary Field. TECHNICAL SUPERVISION: Percy Smith. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Everyman, Hampstead
Wake Up and Feed — Aug. 3–9
Lupins — Aug. 10–16
Living Lies — Aug. 17–23
Home from the South — Aug. 24–30
Hedgerows — Aug. 31–Sept. 6
Imaginative descriptions of natural processes.

Seventh Day
DIRECTION: A. P. Barralet. DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont Palace — Aug. 3–5
Corona — Aug. 6–8
Magnet — Aug. 6–8
Empress — Aug. 31–Sept. 5
A study of the English Sunday.

Shipyard
DIRECTION: Paul Rotha. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Everyman, Hampstead — Aug. 3–5
The building and launching of the liner "Orion."

6.30 Collection
DIRECTION: Anstey, Watt. PRODUCTION: John Grierson, G.P.O. DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
BRISTOL: Empire — Aug. 24–29

FILM GUIDE (continued)

SHORTS

Song of Ceylon

DIRECTION: Basil Wright. PRODUCTION: John Grierson.
LONDON: Studio 1 — Aug. 9–15
MANCHESTER: Tatler — Aug. 17–22

This was England

DIRECTION: Mary Field. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Strand News, Agar Street — Aug. 3–5
Everyman, Hampstead — Aug. 10–15
BRISTOL: Redcliffe — Aug. 3–5
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur — Aug. 6–8
A Suffolk documentary.

Wild Wings

DISTRIBUTION: Warner Bros.
LONDON: Piccadilly News, Gt. Windmill Street — July 30–Aug. 2
BRISTOL: Embassy — Aug. 24–29
MANCHESTER: Tatler — Aug. 31–Sept. 5
LIVERPOOL: Tatler — Aug. 24–29
Bird life on an American island.

Workers and Jobs

DIRECTION: Arthur Elton. DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur — Aug. 24–26
NEWCASTLE: Pavilion, Ferryhill — Aug. 31–Sept. 2
The work of the Labour Exchanges.

ADVERTISING SHORTS

The Birth of the Robot (Coloured puppet film)

DIRECTION: Humphrey Jennings and Len Lye. PRODUCTION: Gasparcolor, for Shell. DISTRIBUTION: Gasparcolor.
MANCHESTER: Castle — Aug. 17–22
BRISTOL: Embassy — Aug. 24–29

Leave it to John (Cartoon and Cinecolour)

DRAWN BY: Ub Iwerks, Celebrity Films. PRODUCTION: Revelation Films for "Boots." DISTRIBUTION: Revelation Films.
LONDON: Regent, Euston Road — Aug. 10–16
BRISTOL: Vandyke — Aug. 3–9
Carlton — Aug. 10–12
LIVERPOOL: Commodore — Aug. 3–9
MANCHESTER: Gaiety — Aug. 3–9
La Scala, Oxford Road — Aug. 10–16
CARDIFF: Queens — Aug. 10–16
BIRMINGHAM: Pavilion, Stichley — Aug. 10–16
Pavilion, Wylde Green — Aug. 10–16
NEWCASTLE: Grainger — Aug. 10 16

TIPS OF THE MONTH

Modern Times

STARRING: Charlie Chaplin, Paulette Goddard. DIRECTION: Chaplin.
PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION: United Artists.
EDINBURGH: Picture House — Aug. 10–15
New Victoria — Aug. 10–15
MANCHESTER: Gaumont Palace — Aug. 24–29

BRITISH FEATURE FILM

The Turn of the Tide

DIRECTION: Norman Walker. STARRING: John Garrick and Joan Maude.
DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Euston Cinema — Aug. 23
MANCHESTER: Regent, Rochdale Road — Aug. 27–29
LEICESTER: Picturedrome — Aug. 6–8
BIRMINGHAM: Lyric — Aug. 13–15
BRISTOL: Premier — Aug. 3–5
Olympia — Aug. 6–8
Knowle or Gaiety — Aug. 17–19
Radcliffe — Aug. 20–22
Magnet — Aug. 27–29
LEEDS: Lyceum — Aug. 10–15
Parkfield — Aug. 3–8
Hillcrest — Aug. 13–15
Gainsborough — Aug. 31–Sept. 5
Royal, Meadswood Road — Aug. 10–15
Regent — Aug. 24–29

FOREIGN FILMS

Madchen in Uniform (German)

STARRING: Hertha Thiele and Dorothea Wieck. DIRECTION AND PRODUCTION: Leontine Sagan.
LONDON: Studio One, Oxford Street — Aug. 2–8

The Testament of Dr. Mabuse (German)

DIRECTION: Fritz Lang. PRODUCTION: Nebenzahln. DISTRIBUTION: A. Fried.
LONDON: Studio One, Oxford Street — Aug. 9–15

So Ended a Great Love (German)

STARRING: Paula Wessely, Willy Forst. DISTRIBUTION: Denning.
LONDON: Studio One, Oxford Street — Aug. 16–22

De Kribbebijter (Dutch)

DIRECTION: Hermann Kosterlitz, Ernst Winan. PRODUCTION: Holfi.
LONDON: Academy, Oxford Street — Aug. 17

Sylvia und ihr Chauffeur (Austrian)

DIRECTION: Hubler-Kahla. PRODUCTION: Ciné Central.
LONDON: Academy, Oxford Street — Following "De Kribbebijter"

FILM SOCIETIES' PROGRAMMES

Next month, when the Film Societies are more active, we intend to publish their programmes in this guide. It is not generally known that there are 110 film societies on record. The movement is growing and it is a matter of importance that film societies follow each others' activities.

Wardour Street Needs Facts

By Dr. Hans Hirsch, author of the German Film Year Book (Jahrbuch der Filmindustrie).

Scene: 80–82 Wardour Street, second floor, British Board of Film Censors. The enquiring writer wishes to have figures—statistical material about films. "How many American, French and other long features have been censored in the last three months?" The lady at the counter politely answers: "I am sorry it is impossible to give you these figures; we ourselves have no details. We have only one thing which will help you. Here is our last monthly review about censored films; that is the only way we register."

"Thank you," and later on the poor statistician can study this monthly review. "Name of Film" (in alphabetical order), "Publisher," "Length, in feet" and "Class of certificate": these headings are the basis for composing statistics about foreign films in England. It provides no material for the statistician.

Foreign films? Perhaps there is another important source which could be of assistance. Of course, "The Board of Trade," administrators of the Cinematograph Films Act, may have the figures.

The Board of Trade: a polite official and a polite answer: "I am sorry, we cannot give these figures because we are not interested in such details. In our administration of the Quota Act we only classify *British* and *Foreign*. Here, look, our *Journal*" . . . The appalled statistician flees. . . .

And then later in the Bonded Film Stores, where imported films from abroad are checked, "We do not have these statistics because only a few foreign films pass through our hands. Perhaps you might ask the different ports. But there is no central authority or other institution which gathers and specifies this material, at least not adequately." And the man is right. If all these import figures were gathered, it would be impossible to get the correct numbers, as there is no distinction between the copies of one film and the original of another, so the values must always be incorrect.

Three disappointing visits. A serious thing—typical of conditions in British Film statistics—in contrast to other countries where the film trade and production scale are not comparable with Great Britain, but where statistics are incomparably better compiled.

The figures relating to the turnover of the cinemas and comprehensive data about box office revenues form the basis of all statistical work. It is impossible to get exhaustive material about this financial source of all film production.

"Don't trouble the members!" That is the unwritten but firm principle of the film trade organisations. The C.E.A. and K.R.S. keep inadequate records of these figures and incidentally all exhibitors are not members of the C.E.A. so the statistician is forced to estimate and deduct.

It might be possible to take the entertainments tax income as a basis. But the tax as a starting-point for cinema results is particularly bad. The Government, for instance, does not differentiate between the receipts from the cinema tax and the receipts from concerts. So again one has only total figures and is forced to estimate and deduct.

More favourable are the records of cinema theatres in the United Kingdom. The Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association regularly registers these figures. The organisation receives not only information from its members but also from the others.

"OF URGENT IMPORTANCE"

"I have no hesitation in supporting the suggestion that the organisation of trade statistics in the film business is a matter of great and urgent importance, and that the beneficial results that would in time arise from the material that would thus be made available would compensate many times over for any trouble taken to get them."

SIMON ROWSON

Another trouble which arises, however, is the question of seating capacity. A comprehensive source in this respect is the Kinematograph Year Book and the Cinema Buyers' Guide. But these figures are not very reliable, often being inflated and expressed in round numbers. On the other hand, there should be correct figures for seating capacity. The Board of Trade registers all cinemas in order to control their obligations under the Quota Act. However, the Board is content to record the existence of a cinema, independent of classifications regarding its seats, frequency of performances, etc.

There are other sources which know about seating capacity such as local authorities, empowered to grant licences for cinemas. They are well informed regarding enlargements, new buildings, etc., but there is no central organisation which regularly gathers this valuable material.

Previously, we have only discussed foreign films and the inability to procure sufficient figures about them.

What is the position relating to British films? Let us cast an eye on the statistics of the Board of Trade. This institution only distinguishes "long" and "short" films. The length alone is apparently important. There are no figures about the type of films, and even if the Board had thought of this, the statistics would be insufficient as the Board of Trade does not recognise newsreels, educational, scientific, interest, industrial and advertising films, because these are not "registrable" as British films.

Estimations and deductions all the time. Consider, for instance, the papers of Mr. Rowson (author of "A Statistical Survey of the British Film Industry, 1934"). It is astonishing for a film statistician from abroad to realise the roundabout methods of obtaining even relatively sufficient British film figures. And correct figures are necessary. They are important for government, for parliament and local authorities, for the trade and, last but not least, for scientific work which, on this particular subject, is far better developed abroad than in England.

Regular and correct film statistics are a necessity, in particular for Britain with a film industry which is growing without plan or order or thought of to-morrow. This is clearly revealed by the recent endeavours of the different interested parties to get sufficient material for a real knowledge of the British Quota situation.

What are the conditions of German film statistics in contrast, and what could be done in Britain?

Let us begin with the above-mentioned example of "Foreign" films. In this case the German Censor Office provides exhaustive material through its weekly published lists which give the origin of every censored film. In contrast to the English censor, both production firm and distributor or importer are published. On the basis of this material, the daily trade papers compile regularly published statistics. The daily film newspaper *Lichtbildbuehne* has developed statistics for years and maintains, together with the *Film-Kurier*, a special statistical apparatus. If the British Board of Film Censors published its lists in a more complete way, statistics would be arrived at quite apart from the Board of Trade which should provide important material as well.

Regarding cinema receipts, in Germany the semi-official *Institut fur Konjunkturforschung* undertakes regular monthly statistics in 30 German towns which are taken from many different districts, industrial and rural, and are different in size. So it is possible to obtain representative figures.

The *Institut fur Konjunkturforschung* publishes the figures ("sold tickets," the turnover and figures of the different admission prices). The new statistical department of the *Reichsfilmkammer* plans the compilation of still more comprehensive material.

If it were possible to obtain the figures of individual cinemas' turnover a good insight could be obtained into the development of the film industry.

There is an inclination in this country to underestimate the value of regular and exhaustive film statistics. If they were undertaken with any degree of thoroughness the film trade would find them to be of incalculable value.

Trade's Collective Advertising Scheme

C.E.A. have set up strong committee to investigate proposed £100,000 collective advertising scheme. Simon Rowson suggests that for every two eligible people who visit the cinema regularly, there are three who don't.

U.S.A. exhibitors spend £14,000,000 a year on advertising. C.E.A.'s £100,000 scheme represents ¼ per cent of year's net receipts of the trade, and would be met by addition of 50,000 weekly admissions to British cinemas. Present aggregate advertising allocation of British cinema industry estimated at 3½ per cent to 4 per cent. U.S.A. percentage is nearer ten. On the other hand, American exhibitors earn £14 per week; British a little over £9. Advertising makes the difference, says Rowson.

Owned and Controlled by Cinema Contact Ltd., 9 Oxford Street, London, W.1. Printed in Great Britain by The Shenval Press Ltd., 58 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.
Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Gordon & Gotch, 75-79 Farringdon Street, E.C.; South Africa: Central News Agency; Canada: Gordon and Gotch & Imperial News Co. Ltd., Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver.